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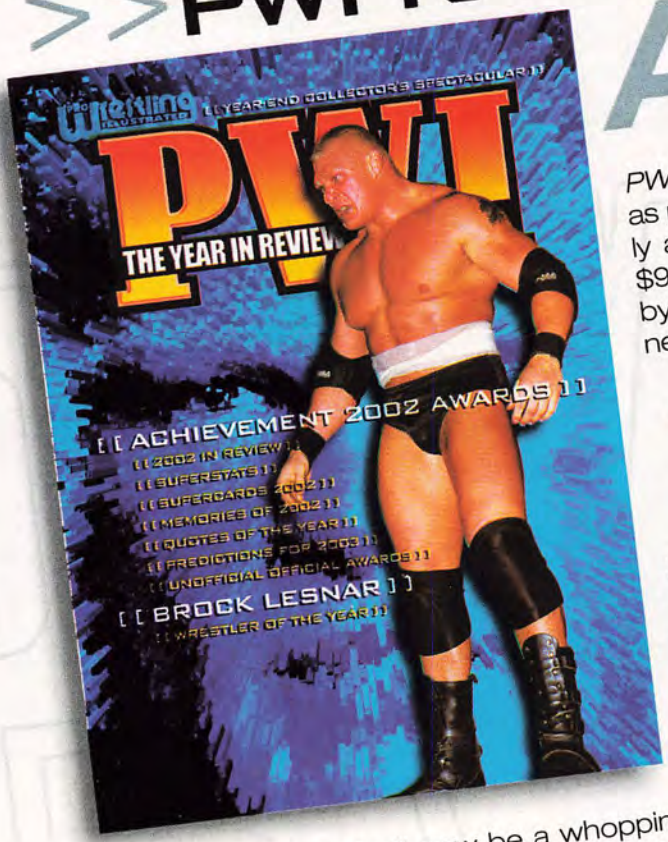

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from the desk of...

JOHN BRADSHAW LAYFIELD has a few mentions throughout this issue of *PWI*, but none—except here and on the ratings pages—within the context of his Smackdown title victory over Eddie Guerrero at The Great American Bash. Well, congratulations, Mr. Bradshaw. For the immediate future, at least, people can talk about your place in wrestling history as a major WWE titleholder instead of your ugly reenactment of world history.

My concern here, though, is for the future. His absurd behavior in Germany aside, Bradshaw is a moderately talented big man, with better than average mike skills, who has been around long enough and worked hard enough to be rewarded with a major push. But if WWE is looking for that next impact player to carry it beyond The Rock/Austin era, Bradshaw is not the man. Of course, one can assume that WWE brass already knows that, since everybody else does. In fact, if Bradshaw had been a titleholder at the time we ranked the WWE champions in our 40th anniversary celebration last year, he would have received a D grade, putting him in the company of the Iron Sheiks of the world.

Is this a harsh assessment? The other champions were graded on their full title reigns, while Bradshaw hasn't been given a chance to make his mark. And he did, after all, beat the highly respected Eddie Guerrero fair and square in a bullrope match to get the title. The problem I have with Bradshaw is that I am impatient. I have seen the passing of several eras over the years, including that of Hulk Hogan, Bret Hart, and Austin/Rock. I am frustrated by the fact that the man who brought wrestling a combination of the most athletic credibility and entertainment value—Kurt Angle—is in a continual battle to save his career from the ravages of injury. I had mixed emotions as a man who seemingly had legit superstar potential—Brock Lesnar—said goodbye to the sport after coming to grips with the fact that he just didn't like it. I see young men who seem to have everything it takes to lead the company into the future—Randy Orton, John Cena, and Shelton Benjamin—champing at the bit but not being given a real chance to put the company on their backs.

I would hope that Bradshaw would be considered by WWE strategists as a placeholder for one of those young men, but that doesn't seem to be the case.

There was a point in time when I thought WWE was holding back its blue-chippers, just waiting for the perfect time to unleash their championship runs. The longer WWE waits, however, the more their aura fades and the harder it will be to convince people that they can become any more than what WWE has allowed them to be to this point.

Is it too late? I hope not, but I fear it is. WWE analyst Tommy Pilliard recently made a trip to OVW and reports that there are no "can't-misses" on the developmental roster. Raiding another company is not feasible in this era. WWE has the best it is going to have for the foreseeable future. It has to find a way to make it happen now.

Stu Saks
Publisher

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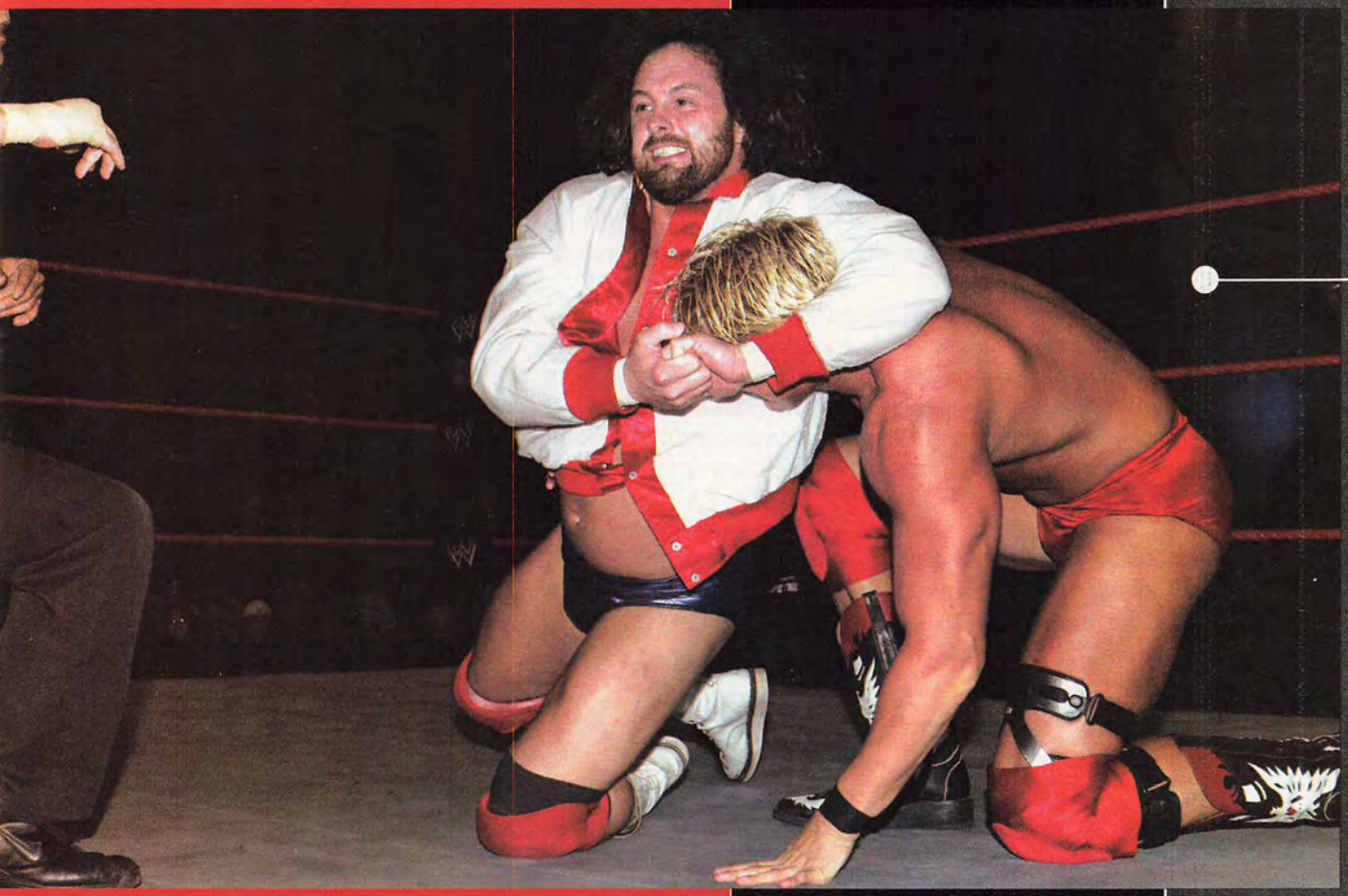

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COVER PHOTO:
Eugene by Duane Long

COVER DESIGN:
Greg Stevens

LOOK FOR THE FALL 2004 ISSUE OF *PWI PRESENTS* (*WOMEN OF WRESTLING*) ON SALE NOW. LOOK FOR THE NOVEMBER 2004 DOUBLE-ISSUE OF *PWI* (A CELEBRATION OF *PWI's* 25th ANNIVERSARY) ON SALE SEPTEMBER 14.

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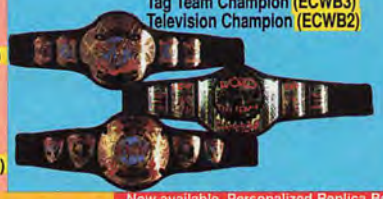

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Undertaker (WWEJ00108)	$15.00 each
Rey Mysterio (WWEJ00109)	$15.00 each
A-Train (WWEJ00110)	$15.00 each
Complete Set of 6 (WWEJ00111)	$75.00 set

Ruthless Aggression™ Series 9

Steve Austin (WWEJ00112)	$15.00 each
Matt Morgan (WWEJ00113)	$15.00 each
Matt Hardy (WWEJ00114)	$15.00 each
Jamie Noble (WWEJ00115)	$15.00 each
Rob Van Dam (WWEJ00116)	$15.00 each
Kane (WWEJ00117)	$15.00 each
Complete Set of 6 (WWEJ00118)	$70.00 set

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Edge (WWEJ00122)	$15.00 each
Chris Benoit (WWEJ00123)	$15.00 each
Chris Jericho (WWEJ00124)	$15.00 each
Kurt Angle (WWEJ00125)	$15.00 each
Rey Mysterio (WWEJ00126)	$15.00 each
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New

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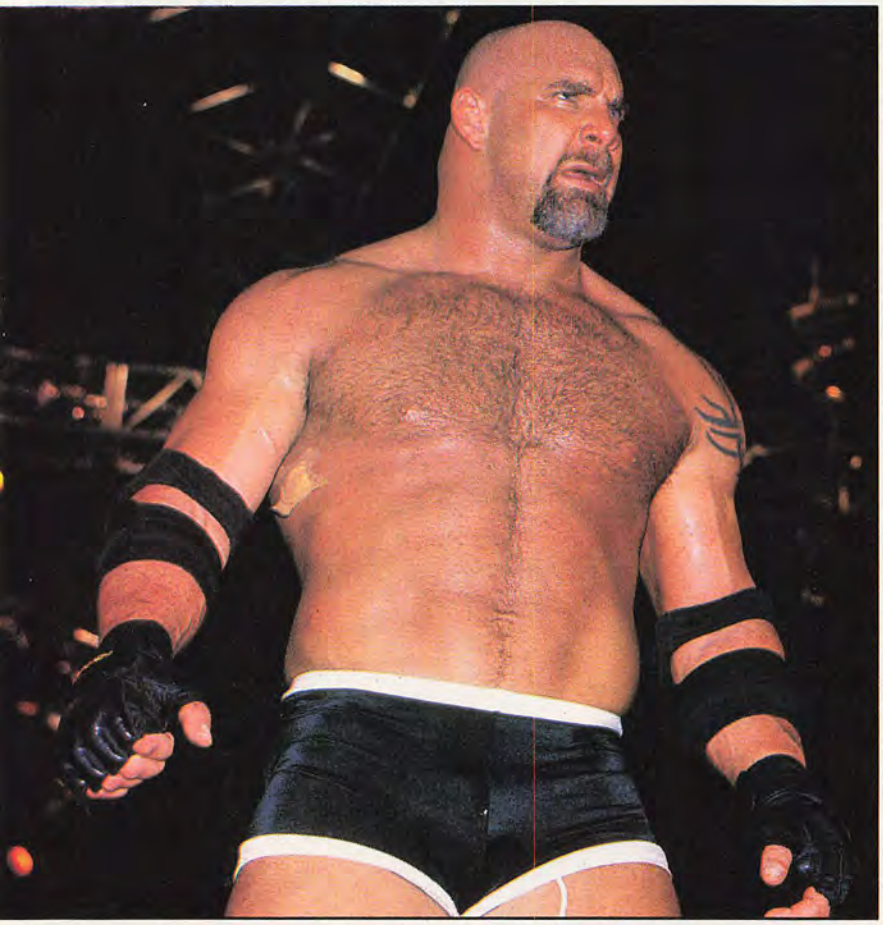
before the bell

Compiled by Will Welsh

Goldberg For Hire

We here at "Before The Bell" like having fun with Bill Goldberg. He's like a piece of fruit that's always ripe for the pickin'. For one reason or another, the big guy always has something going on. It doesn't matter if he's gearing up for a movie role as a homicidal Santa Claus, getting ready for his first-ever shootfight, or appearing in a humane society calendar, he's always newsworthy, which is one reason why we like reading up on his oftentimes eccentric extracurricular activities. For example, one of Goldberg's latest interests is a pay-per-view centered solely on hockey fights.



No hockey game. No puck. No sticks. Not even a goalie. Just fights for the sake of fights. Hockey fans love brawls, the people behind this PPV reason, so why let an actual game get in the way? Just get to the fights.

We have no idea why Goldberg would want to associate himself with such a strange event, even as a commentator, but that's not our job to figure out. Nope, because we're good citizens, our job is to figure out some even more ridiculous events to which Goldberg can attach his name! Here are some of the best we've found:

The Acme Miniature Circus, an honest-to-goodness traveling flea circus, is a perfect fit for Goldberg for one obvious reason: He can recapture the glory of his WCW championship run by squashing every one of his fellow performers! Can you say deja vu?

The Kinetic Sculpture Race is, according to the race's Web site, a "giddy experience guaranteed to make your face ache from smiling so hard." What is a Kinetic Sculpture Race? Beats the hell out of us. But considering that Goldberg wasn't too happy during his wrestling years, we're pretty sure that he'd appreciate being involved in an event that would make his face ache from smiling so hard.

The Henson International Festival of Puppet Theater, which was inspired by Muppets creator Jim Henson and devoted to the art of puppetry, isn't currently active, but with Goldberg's name attached to it, we're sure that it could fire right back up. Imagine the riveting seminars Goldberg could hold as he details how wrestling officials and wrestlers alike pulled his strings all the way to the bank!

Those are only a few of the many inane events to which we'd like Goldberg to think about lending his name. If you have any specials events and want us to submit them to Goldberg for you, please send your name and address, as well as your hellacious proposal, to: I Want Goldberg for My Silly Event, Too, Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034.

While we can't guarantee your proposals will ever reach "Da Man," we promise you that we'll have a good time reading them! And if we receive enough, we'll print 'em somewhere, sometime!

Talkin' Trash

Here's a list of the top 10 wrestling-related things you've been talking about lately, and our gut reaction to each.

10. Trish Stratus recaptures the WWE women's championship. Well, because nothing is happening with Stacy Keibler, we had to include this news item. Guess what—it's picture time!

9. Hulk Hogan and Bret Hart battle it out in the media during the NHL's Stanley Cup finals. Hogan was rooting on the Tampa Bay Lightning. Hart was cheering on the Calgary Flames. The Lightning won. Unfortunately, hardly anyone saw their good-natured jaw-jackin' banter in newspapers, because, well, we're talking about the NHL here.

8. Chris Harris and James Storm capture their fourth NWA tag team championship. Believe it or not, Harris and Storm are now more prolific NWA tag team champions than the Steiners and The Road Warriors. Does that make them better, too?

7. Ring of Honor's team of Dan Maff and B.J. Whitmer drop their name, The Prophecy. They have also killed our suggestion for their new name: The Prognostication.

6. Brock Lesnar works out for the Minnesota Vikings. Very soon, we might be able to describe Lesnar as the youngest former WWE champion to ever make an NFL practice squad.

5. Eugene. Yeah, he's become so popular that he's now known worldwide by one name, just like ... Victoria, Jacquelyn, and Lita. (If you thought that we were going to say "just like ... Madonna, Prince, and Sting," go dunk your head in the sand.)

4. John Bradshaw Layfield makes Nazi gestures while on tour with WWE in Germany. Not terribly bright. Not bright at all.

3. Triple-H defeats Shawn Michaels in a "Hell In A Cell" match at Bad Blood. Even more beautifully brutal than we expected.

2. Eddie Guerrero vs. John Bradshaw Layfield headlines The Great American Bash. Personally, we would have saved that classic bullrope match for WWE Souled Out.

1. *TNA Impact* debuts on Fox Sports Net. Finally, TNA wrestling for free! Tune in Fridays at 3 p.m., unless you live in New York, Philadelphia, the Mid-Atlantic area ... *aw,* just check your local listings.

The Internet Insider

The following news items were culled from various wrestling-related Web sites—or were they? See if you can pick out the items that were actually reported on the Internet (which doesn't necessarily mean that they are true) and the *one* we blatantly made up. The answers appear at the end of this column on page 11.

1. NWA-TNA Director of Authority Vince Russo, who was largely responsible for the WWF's risque "Attitude" era, has entered a seminary. "I don't expect many to understand," said Russo in an online post, "but in time they will. I believe we all will. It took me 42 years to 'get it', but the point is—I got it. And that's why I'll be attending Denver Seminary School. No, it's not an angle, not a work, but rather the most important thing I will ever do in my life. Where this takes me I have no idea, but again, that is now out of my hands."

2. Along with all the wrestling and shootfighting he's doing in Japan, Bob Sapp has a role in the 2005 movie *Elektra,* which stars Jennifer Garner in the lead role. Sapp is also a front-runner for the part of Ben Grimm, a.k.a. The Thing, in the upcoming Fantastic Four movie and up for a part in *The Transporter 2,* which will begin filming in a few months in Miami and Paris.

3. Dusty Rhodes believes he has found a wrestler with whom he could've had a very profitable feud—if it was 20 years ago. That wrestler? Pimpinela Escarlata, who is Mexico's top transvestite wrestler. Rhodes was blown away by an eight-man tag match that featured two teams consisting of a man, woman, midget, and transvestite, and was particularly impressed with Escarlata, who was a top draw in Mexico a few years ago.

4. TNA is trying to capitalize on the popularity of WWE's Eugene. Recently, TNA officials contacted George "The Animal" Steele in hopes of signing him for a number of appearances, but Steele, who is enjoying his retirement, respectfully declined. Since then, TNA officials have been searching the independent circuit for a wrestler whom they believe is capable enough to take on a Eugene-like role, but they have yet to find anyone promising. Of course, this has led many little-known independent wrestlers to try their hand at a Eugene-esque gimmick in an attempt to get TNA's attention.

This Month in Wrestling History

October

October 4, 1907: Leopold McLaglen (brother of actor Victor McLaglen) wrestles T.H. Kanada in a wrestling vs. jujitsu match held in New Westminster, British Columbia. While the referee ruled it a no-contest after watching McLaglen lay on top of Kanada for two hours, McLaglen subsequently advertised himself as the jujitsu champion of the world. (After a lengthy Internet search, we found out that Victor McLaglen won the 1935 Best Actor Oscar for his role in the film *The Informer,* which makes us feel a whole lot better about our decision to include him in a parenthetical mention in an old edition of our annual *Wrestling Almanac And Book Of Facts.* We don't want to give just anyone a mention in the ol' *Almanac,* right?)

October 27, 1927: Wrestler Joe Smikus wins two pinfalls from boxer John Mack at Fort Hayes, Ohio. (We did searches on these two guys, too! If you go to http://www.bubblestheartist.com/htm/bigredfists.htm, you'll get a little background on John Mack—along with a pleasant little musical interlude! On the other hand, our search on Joe Smikus and wrestling turned up *nada.* But with a name like Smikus, is that really surprising?)

October 9, 1934: Wrestler Abe Kashey pins boxer Charlie Retzlaff in the fourth round of a mixed bout before 7,500 fans, with Jack Dempsey serving as referee. The next day, the Minnesota Athletic Commission says, "Never again." (So what happens 65 years later? That's right, Jessie Ventura is elected governor of Minnesota.)

October 4, 1949: Lillian Ellison (later known as Fabulous Moolah) defeats Cecilia Blevins in Kansas City, Missouri, on the undercard of the Orville Brown-Bill Longson National Wrestling Alliance title match. (My goodness, this woman is still wrestling! Please, someone make her stop. *Please!)*

October 18, 1998: Steve Austin enrages Vince McMahon when, as guest referee for the Undertaker-Kane match for the vacant WWF World title at Judgment Day, he makes a double-three-count after both competitors are laid out by chair shots and declares himself the winner and champion. McMahon later "fires" him. (Too bad for Austin this didn't take place in WCW. His decision might have stood.)

We Heard That!

"Clever, but not really clever."

—Vince McMahon, describing Paul Heyman during an interview with TSN's *Off The Record*

"I think it pisses off TNA management when they read A.J. Styles enjoys wrestling in Ring of Honor more than TNA. He said that in an interview. He's just an honest guy. You make him NWA World heavyweight champion, but he's winning every match by brass knuckles to the head or run-ins by [Vince] Russo and stuff. I'm sitting there thinking it's bulls___ because it's not like you have a guy who can't work. You have one of the top wrestlers in the world and you're not letting him do what he does best."

—Ring of Honor champion Samoa Joe, commenting on whether TNA is jealous of Ring of Honor, in an interview with the *Pro Wrestling Torch*

"If you have thin skin and want a relationship in this business, you're done. I always credit my athletic background for [helping me deal with] that, because while it's tough to watch your girlfriend in a thong on national television, it's also tough when you have a coach screaming three inches from your face. We had a lot of that and some initiating policies for the Virginia Commonwealth University baseball team. After going through a couple of those, I think I can watch my girlfriend in a thong on national television."

—"Irish" Pat Kenney, when asked what it's like to watch his significant other, WWE's Dawn Marie, in the

skimpiest of attire on national television, in an interview with wrestlingobserver.com

"I don't think it was a majority of fans who felt that [I sold out]. There was a small group of fans who I believe felt that way and that was fine. So, the only thing I could have done was just continue to go out and make good movies that were entertaining movies. But not only that, I also made it a point, I made it a strong point, to make sure that any opportunity that I got on every talk show, whether it was on David Letterman or *The View* or anywhere in terms of media and publicity, I always wanted to make sure that everybody knew that I loved wrestling, that I loved professional wrestling. And I came from professional wrestling and I'll never forget that. And I'm proud of where I came from, proud that a lot of the boys in professional wrestling are my friends who will be my friends for life. That was always my mindset."

—The Rock, answering how it felt to have fans chant "You sold out!" at him, during an interview on WWE's Internet radio show, *Byte This!*

"I'm actually a couple of years older than Brock, so I was a heavyweight before he was. So when my eligibility was up, that's when he came in. So for the first year-and-a-half, I was his coach/sparring partner. For about eight months, I pretty much spanked him, then all of a sudden, he got really good really fast, and it wasn't too long before I went from coach to straight sparring partner."

—Shelton Benjamin, discussing his relationship with Brock Lesnar during their days together at the University of Minnesota, in an interview with ign.com

June's Best

"Hey, Lou, did they just pull you out of a spider hole or what?"

—John Wyatt, Stuttgart, AR

"Lou, if you don't share, I will stun your ass back to the '70s!"

—Mel Frazier, mmf1478@yahoo.com

"Steve, are you sure Chris Benoit wants my tooth?"

—WillowDana@aol.com

"Okay, Saddam, you can tell me. Where *are* those weapons of mass destruction?"

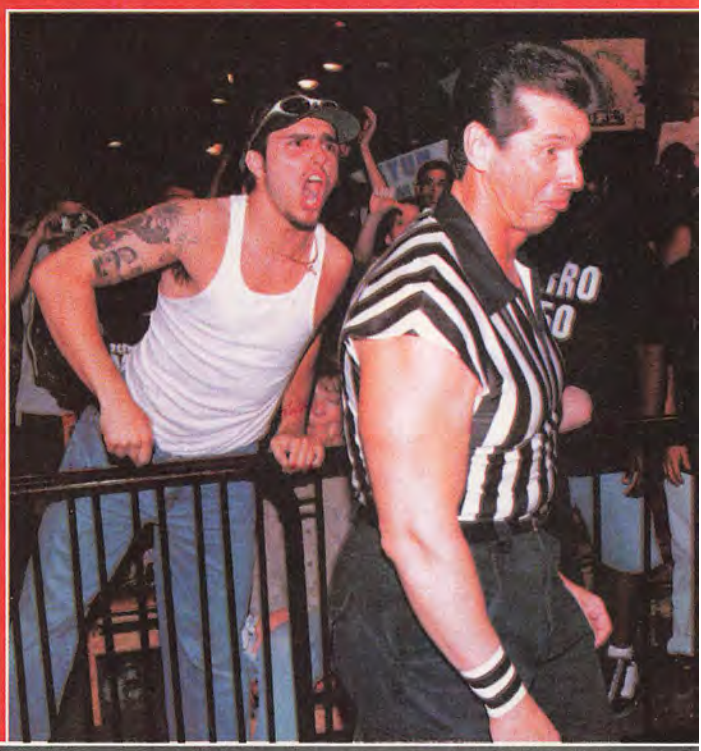
—ACOLTON73@cs.com

"See, Steve, if I wiggle it like this, it feels like it's gonna fall out. Do you think the tooth fairy works on weekends?"

—Sharon Frazier, gordiz_98@yahoo.com

caption me!

Think you're a better writer than the editors at *PWI?* Here's your chance to prove it, punk! This photo of Vince McMahon taking a little verbal abuse from an irate fan needs a short, concise, and downright uproarious caption. If you think you're up to the task, e-mail your zany quips to prowrestlingillustrated@yahoo.com, or slap a stamp on an envelope and snail-mail it to "Caption Me!" Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034. Three issues from now, we'll share with you the best of the bunch—and the funnier the better.



Answers to Internet Insider:

Item 4 is totally made up.

ringside

With Will Welsh

JOHN BRADSHAW LAYFIELD created a maelstrom of controversy during WWE's June tour of Germany when he performed the Nazi goose step and "Heil Hitler" hand salute during prematch introductions and a match with Smackdown champion **Eddie Guerrero**. The gestures, which are illegal in Germany and can lead to prosecution and possible jail time, disgusted the German audience and overshadowed the rest of the card. WWE management reportedly reprimanded Layfield.

John Bradshaw Layfield believes too much was made of him goose-stepping and making Nazi gestures in a ring in Germany. CNBC, a cable network for which he worked, and many others disagreed.

Bradshaw's other employer, cable news channel CNBC (for which Bradshaw had been moonlighting as a financial analyst), did more than reprimand the Texan: It fired him.

"We find his behavior to be offensive, inappropriate, and not befitting anyone associated with our network," said a CNBC spokesman in a prepared statement. In the weeks following the incident, Layfield defended his actions numerous times, saying that when he was performing the goose step and the Nazi salute, it wasn't him who was doing it, but the JBL character.

"I was playing a character," Layfield told the *Washington Post*. "It's the same as **Vin Diesel** playing a Nazi ... I draw the line between me and my character. That's like saying **Anthony Hopkins** really enjoys cannibalism."

However, in an online column posted on wwe.com, Layfield contradicted himself when answering a question concerning the similarities between his JBL character and **Ted DiBiase's** "Million-Dollar Man" persona.

"JBL does have some similar traits with Ted DiBiase," wrote Layfield. "Hopefully, JBL can wrestle as great as Ted could. I believe my character has really blurred the line of reality in a way few characters have. Actually, my character is me, so I don't feel like I am a copy of anyone."

Despite all the controversy, WWE kept Layfield in his main event feud with Guerrero and even used the controversy surrounding the Germany incident and his subsequent firing from CNBC as fodder for that feud.

Some people argue that the outrage over Layfield's actions wasn't warranted, that because his actions were performed in the context of a wrestling match, he should have been forgiven this trespass without too much fanfare. Others believe that Layfield's actions deserved at least a fine or suspension from WWE and maybe even his termination from the company.

I'm somewhere in the middle.

Layfield's actions were incredibly ignorant. No one, absolutely no one, should pay homage to a political movement whose purpose was the extermination of an entire race of people—and especially in the country where most of the atrocities were committed, and possibly in front of people who suffered through some of the horror first-hand. If German officials had put him in handcuffs and locked him up for the evening, I would have considered justice served. His firing from CNBC wasn't punishment for the sake of punishment—it was an absolute necessity in order for the network to prevent itself from becoming a story on competing news channels. And considering Layfield's abrasive, short-tempered, and often-insensitive personality, CNBC probably shouldn't have hired him in the first place. He was a land mine just waiting to be tripped.

Yes, Layfield got most of what he deserved and, in the end, so did WWE.

For too long, WWE has tried to use race-baiting tactics as part of its

Brock Lesnar continues to show that he's serious about making the NFL. Although he is viewed as a long-term project at best, he is impressing scouts with his speed, and many believe he could earn a spot on some team's practice squad.

programming and storylines. For the most part, it has gotten away with pushing groups such as **The Nation of Domination** and angles such as **Triple-H** vs. **Booker T** and, more recently, JBL vs. Guerrero. This time, WWE got its hand caught in the cookie jar. For better or worse, JBL took the impact of a punch that's been a while in the winding up. Let's hope that in the future, Layfield will watch what he says and WWE will temper what it produces.

Brock Lesnar's attempt at making an NFL team is garnering quite a bit of mainstream press. Lesnar recently tried out for the Minnesota Vikings and impressed scouts by running a 4.75 40-yard dash, a better-than-average time for NFL defensive lineman. Most NFL insiders consider him a long shot to make an NFL squad, but because of his natural athletic ability, they're willing to give him a look and work with him if need be. Don't be surprised if he makes somebody's practice squad.

According to the rumor mill, FX officials were so impressed with the debut of *TNA Impact* that they've expressed interest in bringing the show to that channel and giving it a prime time slot. Because FX and Fox Sports Net, the network that *TNA Impact* is currently carried on, are both owned by Fox, this switch actually has a chance of happening should this prove to be more than a rumor. In the case of TNA, a move to FX would be a no-brainer. Not only would the show get prime time exposure, but it would also avoid the many pre-emptions that are plaguing it on Fox Sports Net because of local sports programming.

Sonjay Dutt has taken over the role of **Sabu's** spokesman in TNA, a role filled in ECW by loud manager **Bill Alfonso**, among others. He's also been an occasional tag team partner of Sabu. Unfortunately for Dutt, who is a very promising young wrestler, he started with Sabu while Sabu was feuding with **Raven**, one of the sport's best talkers. Nothing like getting thrown into the fire, huh?

Chavo Guerrero Sr., otherwise known as **Chavo Classic**, was fired by WWE after no-showing two consecutive house shows in mid-June and not contacting anyone in the company about it. He was said to be upset that WWE wanted him to participate in storylines that he considered humiliating. He did show up for the *Smackdown* taping on the night following the two missed house shows and lost the cruiserweight title to **Rey Misterio Jr.** in his last appearance.

Shane Douglas has ended his career as an active wrestler with TNA (for the time being at least), as he's accepted an agent position with the

A lot of people believe Chavo Guerrero Sr. blew a great gig when his no-showing two Smackdown house shows in June all but forced WWE to fire him. There were reports he wasn't happy with Creative's ideas for him.

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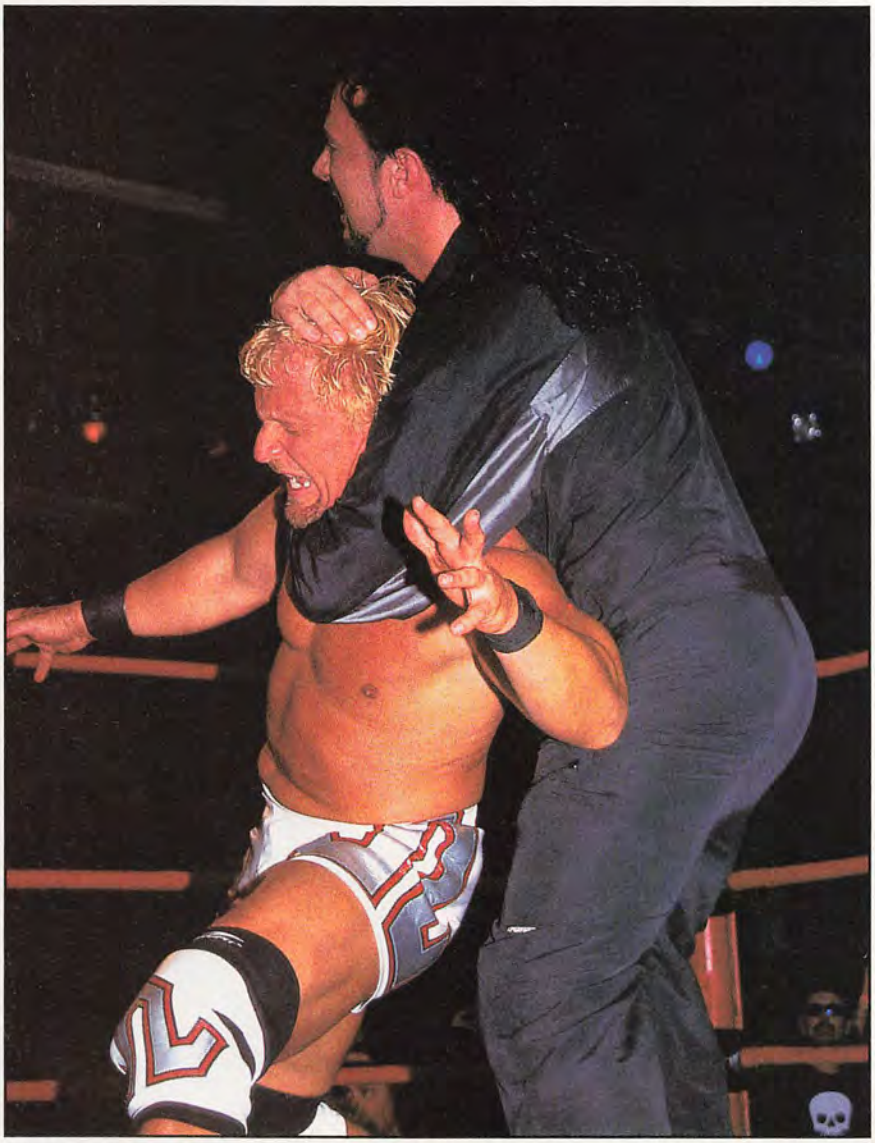
company. He's still expected to wrestle at least occasionally on the independent circuit ... **Bill DeMott** has officially retired from the ring, ending a 14-year-career after being unable to sufficiently recover from a broken neck. You can still see and hear him on *WWE Velocity* calling matches with **Josh Matthews** ... Speaking of announcers, **Konnan** could be departing TNA for a position with WWE's Spanish announce team. However, Konnan is under contract to TNA, so TNA officials would have to give him a release in order for him to make the jump.

Doctors have cleared the oft-injured **Scott Steiner** to wrestle, but his WWE contract is set to expire this fall, and WWE is expected to let him go without making an extension offer or even using him at all ... **Sean Waltman**, the former **X-Pac** and **Syxx-Pac**, seems to be angling for a comeback with WWE, but it's not clear if WWE would be willing to hire him considering the baggage he's carried with him in the past. He was spotted backstage at Judgment Day in Los Angeles in May ... **Bret Hart** is considering appearing in a children's play entitled *Aladdin,* which is set to hit the stage in Toronto this November and December. The "Hitman" has yet to commit to the production.

That does it for me this month, fans. Enjoy your wanderings. ☐



Whatever happened to Sean "X-Pac" Waltman? His last high-profile appearance came in TNA last summer. It looks like he's interested in returning to WWE.

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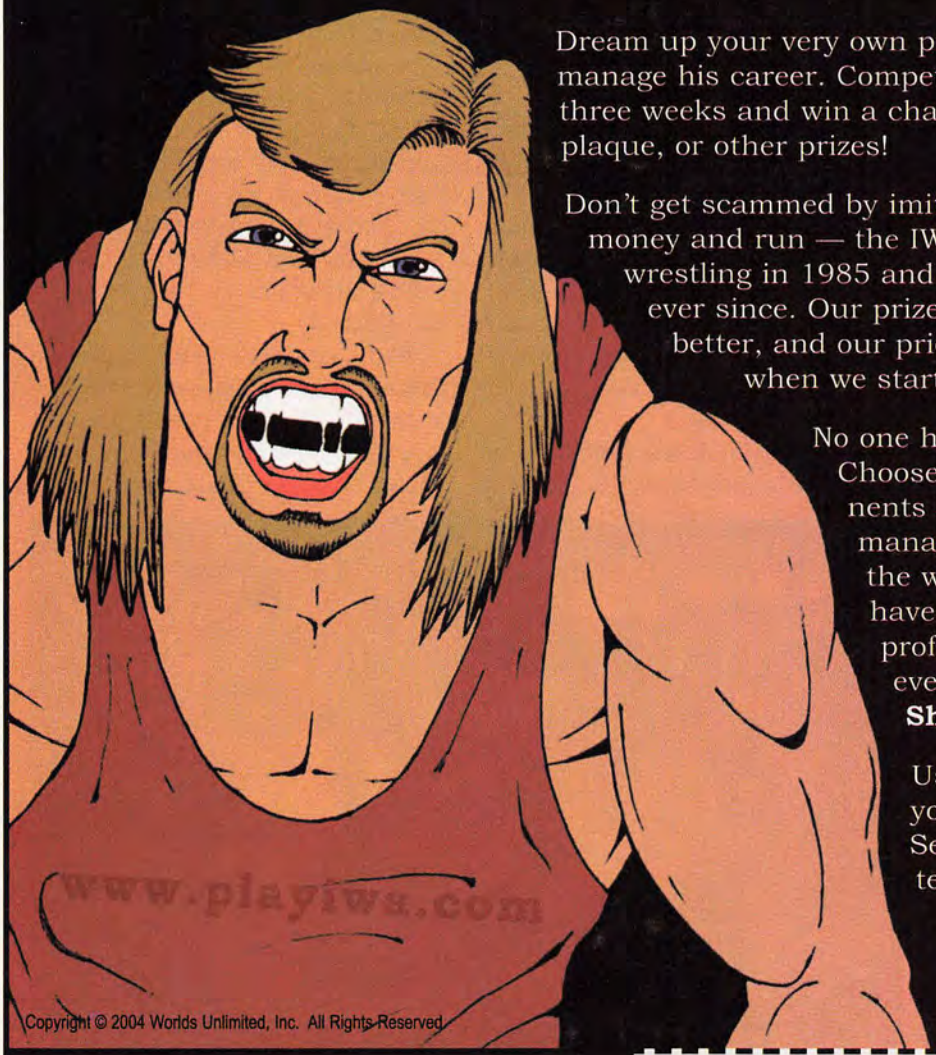

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15. Cross body block
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17. Drop kick
18. Eagle split
19. Elbow smash
20. Eye gouge
21. Face rake
22. Fireman's carry ram
23. Flying body press
24. Flying clothesline
25. Flying drop kick
26. Flying elbow drop
27. Flying head butt
28. Flying mare
29. Forearm smash
30. Foreign object
31. Full nelson
32. Giant swing
33. Grapevine
34. Hair pull
35. Hammer lock
36. Head lock
37. Head stomp
38. Hip roll
39. Irish whip
40. Knee drop
41. Leg lock
42. Leg sweep
43. Manager interference
44. Monkey flip
45. Overhead toss
46. Pole ram
47. Reverse chin lock
48. Rolling scissors
49. Rope burn
50. Russian sickle
51. Savate kick
52. Scissors grip
53. Shoulder breaker
54. Slingshot
55. Snap mare
56. Step-over toe hold
57. Suplex
58. Surfboard
59. Turnbuckle smash
60. Wrist lock

61. Abdominal stretch
62. Avalanche
63. Backbreaker
64. Backroll press
65. Belly to belly
66. Big splash
67. Boston crab
68. Brain buster
69. Camel clutch
70. Cobra clutch
71. Cradle
72. Crucifix
73. DDT
74. Figure four
75. Flying leg drop
76. Gourd buster
77. Hurricanrana
78. Moonsault
79. Neckbreaker
80. Piledriver
81. Power bomb
82. Power slam
83. Scorpion deathlock
84. Sleeper
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87. Stunner
88. Sunset flip
89. Superplex
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1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____

6 _____ 7 _____ 8 _____ 9 _____ 10 _____

SET-UP HOLDS: *Choose 5 of the holds at the left numbered 61-90. Only use a hold once.*

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____

FINISHING HOLD: *Create your own custom final maneuver or choose a hold from our list.*

in focus

By Dave Lenker

STING RUMORS REVISITED

Just when I think WWE has finished shopping at the big-name free agent market (because said market has no inventory left), I come across this little nugget from Sting, in an interview with ign.com to promote the latest *Legends Of Wrestling* video game, regarding the possibility of him wrestling for WWE:

"Yeah, I would do it, I definitely would ... This last WrestleMania would've been a good one, WrestleMania XX, just the fact that I've never been part of one ... Vince and I have talked several times over the past few years. The WrestleMania before, he wanted me to rappel out of the ceiling and do something with 'Stone-Cold' Steve Austin ... but once the attorneys get going ... it's tough ... When I talk to Vince, it's easy ... He's been great every time I've talked to him. So you never know. It's something I'm interested in."

Interesting that he also made sure to point out that he is *not* an NWA wrestler and that he didn't want to wrestle for TNA, but opted to do so a few times as a favor to promoter Jerry Jarrett, who gave him his first break. That could be secret wrestling code for, "Hey, Vince, in case you're reading this, I have no loyalty to TNA. I just showed up there because I'm a nice guy, but there's no commitment. I'm available."

Okay, it was not exactly a high-profile interview in which he made these comments, and his interest in WWE wasn't the focal point. Maybe he was just giving the interviewer the kind of answer he wanted to hear. Yet he went so far as to mention specific negotiations and creative plans, and twice in the course of one answer, he said not that he would consider it, but that he would "definitely" wrestle for WWE if a deal could be struck.

I've never been one to believe that one wrestler, unless he is a truly, truly special kind of star, is the cure for what ails a promotion or, in this case, a brand. At this point in his career, Sting is not that. What a wrestler like Sting could do, however, is change the whole dynamic of Smackdown. Right now, Smackdown has a terrific champion in Eddie Guerrero and a superstar-in-the-making holding the secondary championship in John Cena. And both are desperately seeking the right opponents to help them recapture the momentum they had coming out of WrestleMania XX.

JBL, as hard as he tries, is not a main-eventer and not the right match for Guerrero.

And Cena? He needs to pull an Orton and slay a legend or two. Two or three years from now is the time for him to be challenged by a cocky young buck like Rene Dupree, not

Apparently there is still a chance that Sting will sign with WWE. His recent comments certainly point out his interest. Dave Lenker believes he could give the Smackdown brand a much-needed boost.

now, when he's a cocky young buck himself. Cena gains as much from wrestling a guy a few rungs below him on the WWE ladder as Guerrero gains from wrestling a guy who was a lower-card tag teamer as recently as WrestleMania XX.

Nothing.

Then there are the midcarders who have been midcarders far too long—your Dudley Boyz, Rob Van Dams, your Rey Misterios and Booker Ts. And your guys who might be something but are just kind of there now—your Mark Jindraks, your Bashams, Jamie Nobles, even your Mordecais. And your cruiserweight and tag team comedy divisions. And everyone else.

Sting and whatever star power he has left in that face paint could change some of that. Let's go retro and put him in the rafters for just a week or two and wonder about his intentions. Have him stand up to The Undertaker and let us speculate as to why. Maybe have RVD seek an alliance with him while Booker ominously warns everyone not to trust him, not to even let him enter WWE. *Very* slowly build to a Sting-Guerrero Survivor Series showdown while Sting interacts with some of Smackdown's lesser stars, boosting their stature in the process.

Who needs attorneys? We just need Vince to pick up the phone and make the call to Sting himself. Part-time deal, short-term deal, whatever. If he got it done with Goldberg, who showed *zero* interest in WWE, how hard could this be?

Jonny Fairplay did TNA a great service by plugging its pay-per-view and *Impact* on Fox Sports Net on CBS' *Survivor*, but his reward was an appearance at the first *Impact* tapings alongside bodyguard Tyson ... that wasn't shown on TV.

QUICK HITTERS

•What prompted WWE Creative to turn the cruiserweight title into the hardcore title? But now that it's happened, why not put the 24/7 rule in effect?

•Suggestion to Smackdown Creative: Tell Rene Dupree to leave Fifi at home and let's see Theodore Long manage him. There could be some priceless interaction between the two. Long is wasted as manager of *Velocity* star Mark Jindrak for as long as Jindrak remains a *Velocity* star.

•A lot of people were stunned to see Brian "Grandmaster Sexay" Christopher/Lawler rehired by WWE a few months ago. Not so many were stunned to see him fired again a few weeks later. And hardly any were unhappy to see him go again. He reportedly showed up late to a show or two.

•Will we ever see Mr. Bischoff's sister show up to protect her son, Eugene, from evil Uncle Eric, Coach, et al? Might be a good cameo role for OVW manager extraordinaire Synn.

•I expected the unexpected at the last TNA pay-per-view before the first taping of *Impact* for Fox Sports Net, but the former Gorgeous George—Randy Savage's ex—coming out after Jeff Jarrett regained the NWA title wasn't one of the possibilities I considered. Might someone in TNA Creative have thought they were getting the original Gorgeous George?

•Looks like we've seen the last of Scott Steiner in WWE. His contract doesn't expire until fall, but he injured his groin at the Royal Rumble, and Creative was worried about his durability and had nothing for him when he recovered. So "Big Poppa Pump" collects a check for doing nothing for the better part of a year. Certainly not a great two-year investment on WWE's part.

•What the heck happened to Test?

•TNA sure made the most of its signing of *Survivor* villain Jonny Fairplay, didn't it? He appeared on PPV for a few weeks, then disappeared, then was good enough to plug on the last episode of *Survivor All Stars* his involvement with the company, the Wednesday night pay-per-views, and the new show on Fox Sports Net. Two weeks into *Impact's* run on FSN, he had yet to appear on the show, though oddly enough, he did make an appearance in front of the live crowd in Orlando the first week, with a masked bodyguard, no less. Strange.

*(Have a comment or question about "In Focus" or anything else you see in **PWI?** You can contact Dave Lenker via e-mail at dave_lenker@yahoo.com.)* □

off the top rope

By Brandi Mankiewicz

If you wish to contribute to Brandi's mailbag, send your letters to:
TOP ROPE Box 1148 Ft. Washington, PA 19034
Or send e-mail to: **offthetoprope@yahoo.com**

(Editor's note: The opinions expressed in this column are those of the letter writers and Brandi Mankiewicz herself. They do not necessarily reflect the editorial views of this magazine.)

THERE HAS BEEN a recurring theme in my mailbag recently. Apparently, the majority of you think I'm heartless. Your letters are filled with hatred toward me for not sharing your viewpoint. While I get a chuckle from reading your crappy little diatribes, it does make me wonder if you are really serious in thinking that I just don't care. It's not that I don't care about wrestling, it's just that the things that make me smile don't necessarily make you smile.

I do like some things, though. I enjoy Eugene's antics and the way they make William Regal squirm. I enjoy matches that make sense. I enjoy watching an independent wrestling tape and seeing just one wrestler who is taller than I am. I enjoy actually being able to separate my personal and professional lives, no matter how hard it may be. I always enjoy a good ribbing. Speaking of ribs, I love the ribs, cornbread, and fried green tomatoes at Fat Fish Blue in Cleveland, Ohio. What's not to like about Cajun food? Speaking of Cajuns, I also love Lash Leroux's cartoons. Maybe it's just a redhead thing, but I think he's brilliant.

As you can see, I'm not a heartless ogre. Remember though, even with our difference of opinions, I am still one notch higher than you all, because I am your champion!

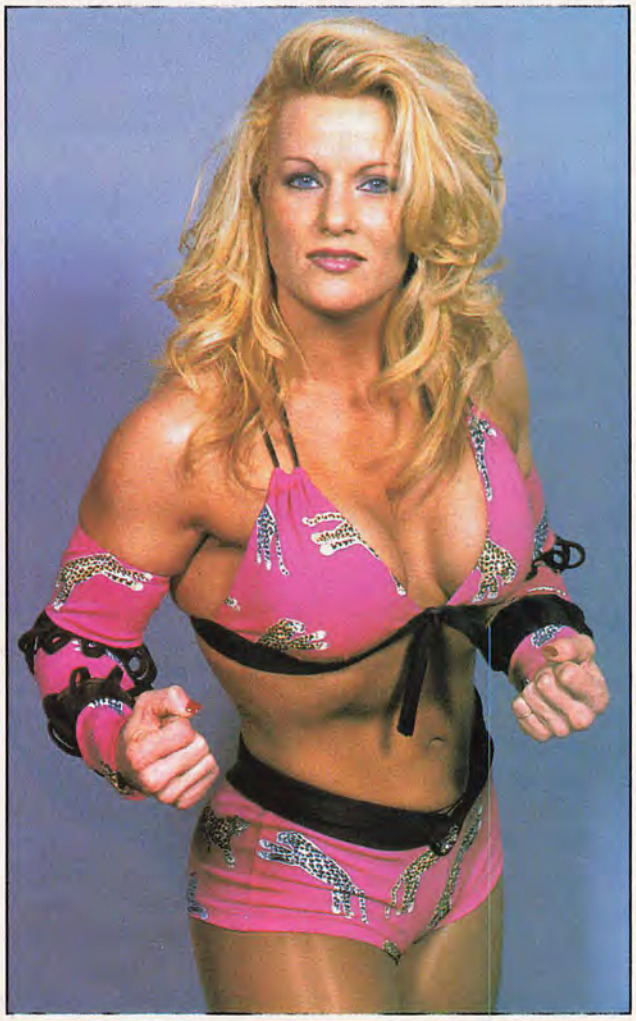
Hi Brandi. I had a question for you. I wrote you an e-mail a while back, and it got put in the July issue of *PWI*. In my e-mail, I wrote about how more people should respect women's wrestling, and not just look at the WWE divas as pure eye candy. Then I made a couple of suggestions in Alexis Laree, April Hunter, Kimona Wana-Laya, and Major Gunns (for more T & A/eye candy). You wrote some horrible things in response to my letter.

Why? Why did you say it like that? What is the point you are trying to make? I do like and respect the fact that some of the WWE divas can actually wrestle. Come on, though, I think Stacy Keibler is beautiful, but are you gonna tell me that WWE hired her because of her wrestling ability? With all due respect to her, I don't ever really see her even trying to contend for the women's title. And Major Gunns could just be more added eye candy for Smackdown and do the occasional catfights. So could Kimona Wana-Laya. From what I've seen though, Kimona (or Leia Meow, as she was known in WCW) can wrestle more than Stacy or Jackie Gayda, and I think she could at least look decent in a match with almost any of the other WWE divas. Granted, she may not be quite as talented as the rest of them, but she wouldn't look totally out of place. I just would like to know why you bashed me so bad.

STEVEN JAMES ADDISON
sja10879@yahoo.com

Hi Steven,

I will type more slowly and use smaller words so you can (I hope) understand me this time. I bashed you so badly because what you wrote to me was completely stupid. There is no comparison between a wrestler like Victoria and a Frank-



Passion is a chick who not only has a good body, but can wrestle as well! She should get a spot on the WWE roster before any WCW castoff. I'd rather see her get a chance to shine than Major Gunns or Kimona. At least she hasn't been overexposed to us on any national TV show. By the way, you did notice that she has a head, right? Just checking.

enhooter like Major Gunns. WWE has enough girls on its roster who can't wrestle to save their lives. Why would it want to hire more untrained, hopelessly washed-up girls like Kimona and Major Gunns when there are so many trained female *wrestlers* out there who are just as pretty and know how to punch? Kimona's only good in the ring when she's being led through a simple match. Major Gunns was so clueless in WCW that the higher-ups decided to use her just as a valet—and she screwed that up, too. Stacy Keibler and Torrie Wilson were hired by WWE for their sex appeal and they fill that role nicely for their respective rosters. Since the T & A quotient is filled, WWE would be better off spending its money on wrestling talent, like Alexis Laree or Passion—who are already in OVW and often wrestle the WWE divas who go down there to help train the girls. Why try to teach an old dog new tricks when you have cute pups that have already mastered them?

Hi Brandi,

Two years ago, I asked you if *PWI* would recognize the NWA title as a world title. Any chance the status of the title will change now that TNA is on national television?

T.J. VERMEER
betweenfalls@yahoo.com

Hi T.J.,

Nope. If you care to notice, there really isn't a world champion in our ratings anymore. Why? Because world dominance is a moot point. Who really cares about world title status when the two main titles are both owned by the same company? Another factor to consider is that we still can't be sure of the relationship between NWA and TNA. *Total Nonstop Action Wrestling Impact* omits NWA from its name. If TNA is distancing itself from the NWA, why shouldn't we? Besides, it took ECW seven years to get world title status, and then it quickly went downhill and besmirched the good name of our ratings pages. We don't want that to happen again.

Miss Brandi,

I am an avid fan of WWE, Smackdown and Raw both. But my question is in relation to the Smackdown superstars, one in particular—well, actually two, Brock Lesnar and Mordecai. They look just alike and sound just alike, too. Where is Brock? And who is Mordecai? And whatever happened to Zach Gowen and Stephanie McMahon as well? If you can let me know the following information, I would greatly appreciate it.

NATHAN A. CLAIBORN
natedogg72204@yahoo.com

Mr. Nathan,

Could you please learn to edit your letters before sending them? It would greatly help the person receiving the letters to figure out exactly what the hell you are trying to communicate. Brock Lesnar is currently trying to prove his manhood by attempting to play in the NFL. He is in no way related to Mordecai, unless you count having a Y chromosome as being a common link. If you truly care to know who Mordecai is, grab your June 2004 issue of *PWI* and check out my column. You'll see someone there who looks familiar. Fortunately, Zach Gowen has returned to the crappy indies from which he never should have emerged. Stephanie McMahon is still head of Creative in WWE and is better off where she is—off camera.

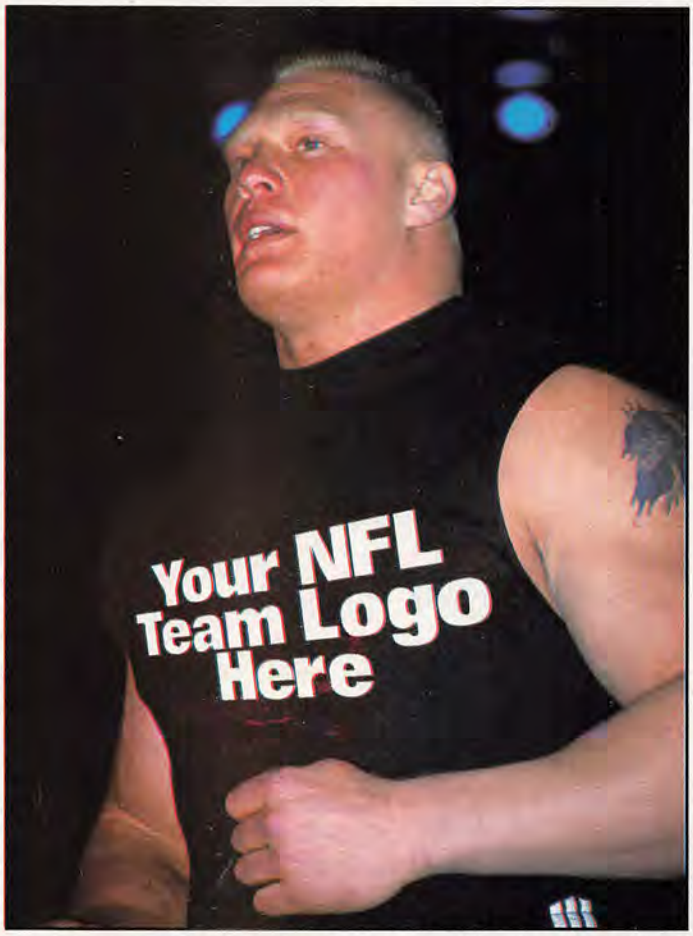
Letter of the month (taken verbatim from the actual letter to share my torture with you all):

You know I've been reading your opinions since 1992. I got to say I really enjoy them. You give your opinion out and you don't care what anyone thinks of it, yet your respectful and it feels like reading from another fan. But I got one problem. 12 years later and I still haven't the slightest clue what you look like. Could you email me a picture of yourself?

VOLCAN STONEBRAKER
itsallforu@hotmail.com

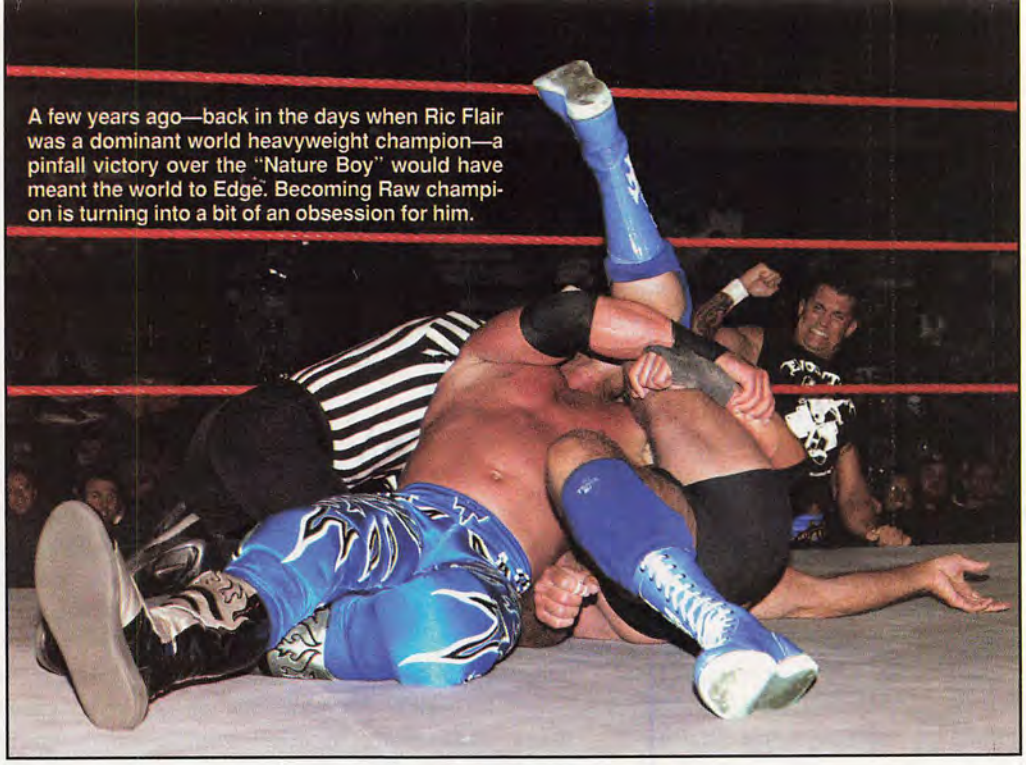
Volcan,

You do realize that I was a college sophomore in 1992, don't you? Unless you were reading *Spectrum* magazine, you weren't reading my stuff. You're right about one thing, though. I don't care what anyone thinks. I don't care that you think you're entitled to have a photo of me e-mailed to your account. I won't even share photos of myself with my family or friends—what makes you think I'm gonna pose for *you*? □



Brock Lesnar thinks he can make it to the NFL this season. Why? Because he's a muscle-headed moron who didn't realize how good he had it. He made a stupid move walking out of WWE without even securing a legitimate tryout agreement with an NFL team.

press conference...



A few years ago—back in the days when Ric Flair was a dominant world heavyweight champion—a pinfall victory over the "Nature Boy" would have meant the world to Edge. Becoming Raw champion is turning into a bit of an obsession for him.

Edge

AT THIS POINT in his career, Edge is on the edge of superstardom. But does he have what it takes to reach that next level? Edge was on the verge of main-event status with Smackdown when a spinal injury forced him to undergo vertebrae-fusion surgery and miss more than a year of action. When Edge returned in March, he was drafted for the Raw brand as part of WWE's talent lottery. The good news was that Edge had a new beginning. The bad news was, in some ways, he had to start over.

Edge now faces the challenge of breaking into Raw's crowded top tier. Raw champion Chris Benoit, Triple-H, Shawn Michaels, and Kane are the established main-eventers. I-C champ Randy Orton, Batista, and Shelton Benjamin are up-and-comers who are creating most of the buzz in the industry. Eugene, surprisingly, is rising fast. Somewhere in the middle is Edge, who is fighting to keep his own spot while vying for the main-event status that has eluded him so far.

By teaming with Benoit to defeat Ric Flair and Batista for the Raw tag team belts, Edge kept himself in the spotlight. But there's a downside to teaming with a world heavyweight champion. Edge is viewed as the obvious number-two man on the team. Cracks are now beginning to show. Edge accidentally speared Benoit on one occasion, and sources suggest that he privately blamed Benoit for their tag team title loss to Rob Conway and Sylvan Grenier in Montreal on May 31. When he and Benoit tried to regain the straps at Bad Blood, Kane—who was slated for a title shot at "The Rabid Wolverine" later in the evening, and who lost to Edge at Backlash in April—attacked the WWE Raw champion, allowing La Resistance to keep the gold by disqualification.

Has Edge's friendship with Benoit helped his career, or has it held him down? Edge gained another tag team title reign, but has it denied him a place in the heavyweight title picture? Editor-in-Chief Dave Lenker, Managing Editor Brandi Mankiewicz, and Senior Writer Harry Burkett sat down with Edge immediately after Bad Blood.

DAVE LENKER: I want to thank you, Edge, for sticking around after the pay-per-view in order to talk with us. After all, there wasn't much need for you to hang out here, since you and Chris Benoit failed to win back the Raw tag team title from La Resistance in the opening match.

EDGE: What an uplifting, positive note to begin the interview on, Dave. Yes, let's talk about how Edge and Chris Benoit lost out in another match with La Resistance. Should I tell you that I didn't wear my lucky charm bracelet tonight? Or that we just forgot to lock Kane in his cage before the match?

LENKER: Sorry, I didn't mean to imply that you and Benoit didn't deserve to win that match. Everyone saw how Kane ran in, gave both you and Benoit the big boot, choke-slammed you, and rammed Benoit into the ringside steps on the outside. There's no doubt about it—you were screwed out of the title tonight.

EDGE: That's right ... and it's not the first time I've been screwed over here in WWE. In fact, it's happened so often that I've almost become used to it. Maybe that's been my problem ever since I got here. But when I came back this last time, I swore that nobody was going to get over on Edge ever again. That's why I made a point to spear Eric Bischoff on my very first night with the Raw brand. I intended to send a clear message that no one's going to mess around with Edge anymore, not even the general manager.

HARRY BURKETT: I think that message has gotten through, because Bischoff has pretty much avoided you ever since. I would say he's on Eugene's case more than he's on yours. But since you and Benoit beat La Resistance by disqualification tonight, I assume you two will get another rematch. What kind of measures are you going to take to make sure you're successful?

EDGE: The key to me and Chris regaining the tag team championship is just for us to be focused. I think Chris took on a little more than he could handle by agreeing to team with me in the opening match against Conway and Grenier, and then facing a monster like Kane later in the night. If Chris wasn't scheduled to defend against Kane on the same pay-per-view, Kane probably wouldn't have interfered, and Chris might have been more focused on our match.

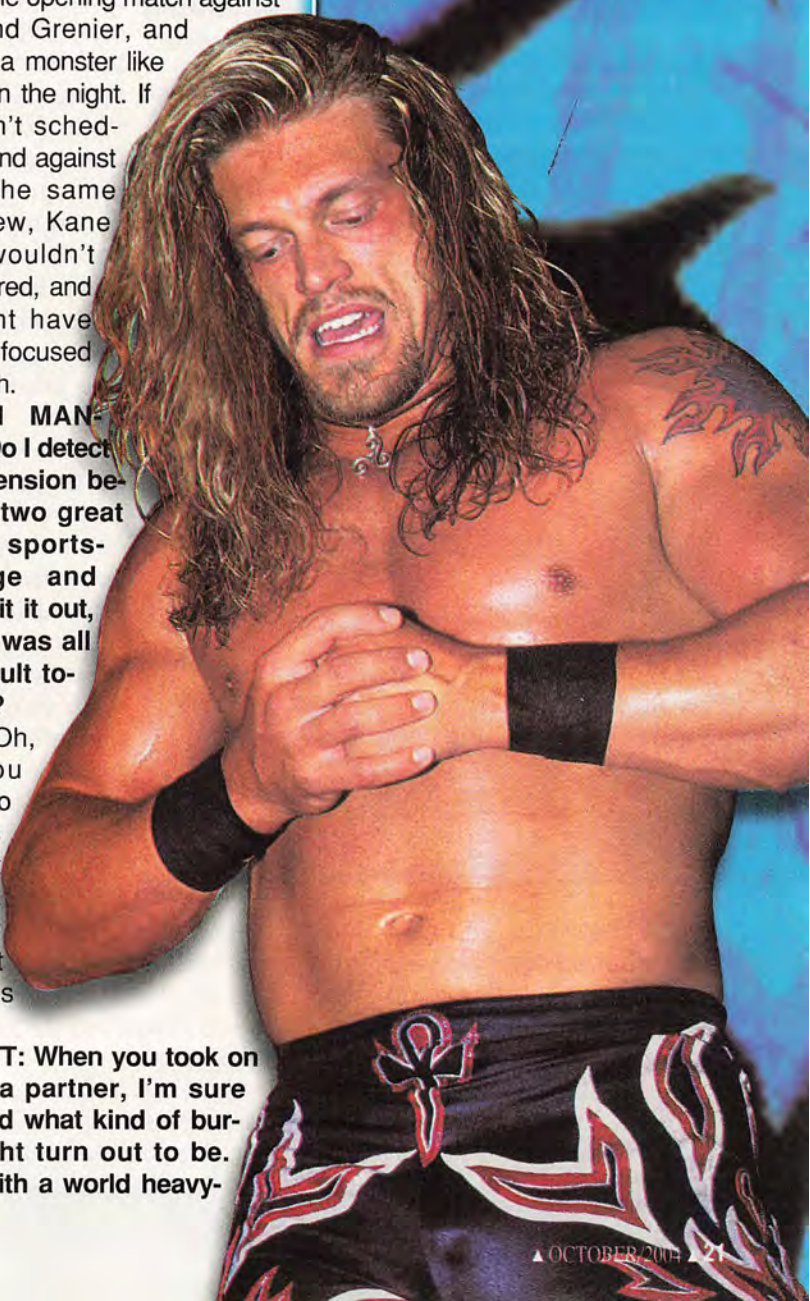
BRANDI MANKIEWICZ: Do I detect some dissension between the two great Canadian sportsmen, Edge and Benoit? Spit it out, Edge, this was all Benoit's fault tonight, right?

EDGE: Oh, Brandi, you just love to stir things up, don't you? I think I'll let my comment stand on its own.

BURKETT: When you took on Benoit as a partner, I'm sure you realized what kind of burden it might turn out to be. Teaming with a world heavy-

"The main difference between the old Edge and the new Edge is that I'm not going to sit around patiently and wait for opportunities to come. I'm no longer going to wait for, quote/unquote, 'my time.' I've been in this company for over six years, and my time had better be now."

Every issue, reporters from PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED will participate in an incisive press conference with a top wrestling star. The questions will be demanding. And the answers will reveal the innermost thoughts of the giants of the sport.



If you notice a little more intensity, a little more aggression in Edge's game as he goes after Ric Flair (above and below) or anyone else, it is by design. You get the sense that he'd rather be Chris Benoit's opponent than his tag team partner.

weight champion isn't easy. Just think about Pedro Morales, who teamed with Bob Backlund—who was World champion at the time—to defeat The Samoans for the tag team title back in 1980. They vacated the title because it conflicted with Backlund's heavyweight title schedule too much, and poor Pedro was left out in the cold. And, most recently, Steve Austin was World heavyweight champion when he teamed with Triple-H to win the tag team title. It wasn't long before they lost the belts to Benoit and Chris Jericho. No, these kinds of partnerships aren't known for their success rate.

MANKIEWICZ: Not to mention the jealousy and resentment that develops. Be honest, Edge, didn't it make you angry that Benoit was obviously placing a higher priority on his singles title? At least when you were teaming with Christian, the tag team title was the number-one priority for both of you. And then there's the fact that, as Benoit's partner, you've frozen yourself out of world title contention. You're relegated to the background, and Benoit comes and teams with you when it's convenient for him.

EDGE: You're painting a grim picture there, Brandi. You're lucky I like you so much. But you're forgetting one important thing. When I team with the champion, I'm teaming with the very best wrestler in the world. I'm fortunate to have a wrestler of that caliber on my side.

MANKIEWICZ: You're backtracking, and it's not very convincing. Maybe Benoit is the Raw champion, and recognized as the top guy simply because you haven't had a chance to wrestle him yet. Don't you think you could beat Benoit one-on-one?

EDGE: Absolutely. Look, I don't know how long this partnership is going to last, anyway. Benoit helped me win the tag team title, and that's great. At the same time, that shouldn't disqualify me from getting a shot at his heavyweight belt. He's faced Triple-H and Shawn Michaels and Kane. I really should be the next in line. And, I hope—as my partner and friend—he'll look out for me and give me a shot. I deserve that consideration.

MANKIEWICZ: Especially since he cost you the tag team title?

EDGE: No comment.

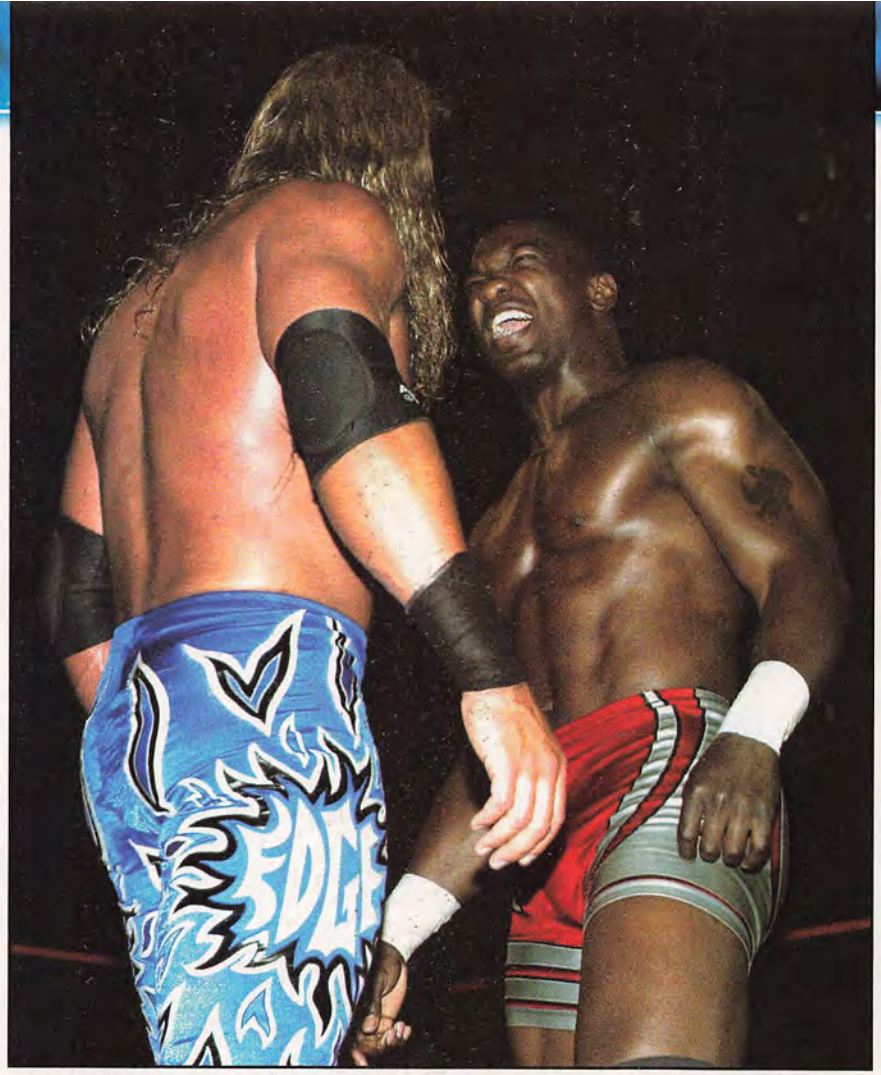
BURKETT: How did you feel about being drafted to Raw? Did you have a preference?

EDGE: Not really. Prior to the draft, I just assumed I was going back to Smackdown, because that's where I was before. I was really looking forward to challenging Eddie Guerrero for the title. We've had it out before. Those would've been some great matches. On the Raw side, though, I might have a chance to face Chris, who's just as intense as Eddie, probably even more so. Right now, WWE has two great champions. I plan on being one of them in the not-too-distant future.

BURKETT: To me, it sounds as if you have returned to WWE determined to become a world heavyweight champion. It seems that the tag team title sidetracked you from your real goal. Did it?

EDGE: Yes, it sidetracked me, but in a good way. I mean, I'd rather have a tag team title sidetrack me, instead of suffering another injury or missing another year. It took me on a side path, but it was worth it.

LENKER: So is the Raw singles title your number-one goal as of this moment? After all, Christian is a member of the Raw brand, too. You two could make another



It's easy to see why Edge is getting more and more frustrated. Young lions like Shelton Benjamin are just as eager to become main-eventers as he is, but he's been waiting much longer. Is a heel turn in the works?

run at the tag team title, and you'd get to hang out with Trish Stratus.

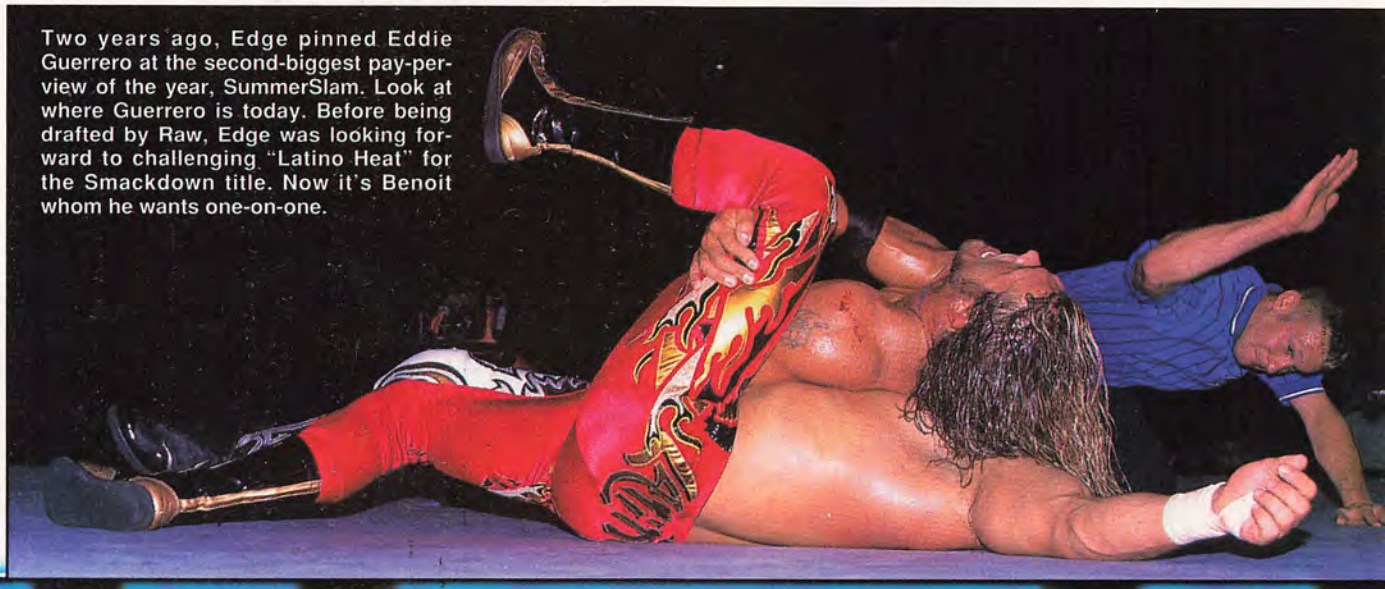
EDGE: I was hoping to get through this interview without having to hear Christian's name in a question. My partnership with him is a closed chapter in my career. Been there, done that.

MANKIEWICZ: Like you've "been there, done that" with Benoit?

EDGE: Maybe. The main difference between the old Edge and the new Edge is that I'm not going to sit around patiently and wait for opportunities to come. I'm no longer going to wait for, quote/unquote, "my time." I've been in this company for over six years, and my time had better be now. If I recall correctly, Triple-H had been in the company for about the same length of time before he took matters into his own hands and began seizing opportunities for himself.

MANKIEWICZ: Is this the prelude to you turning against Benoit?

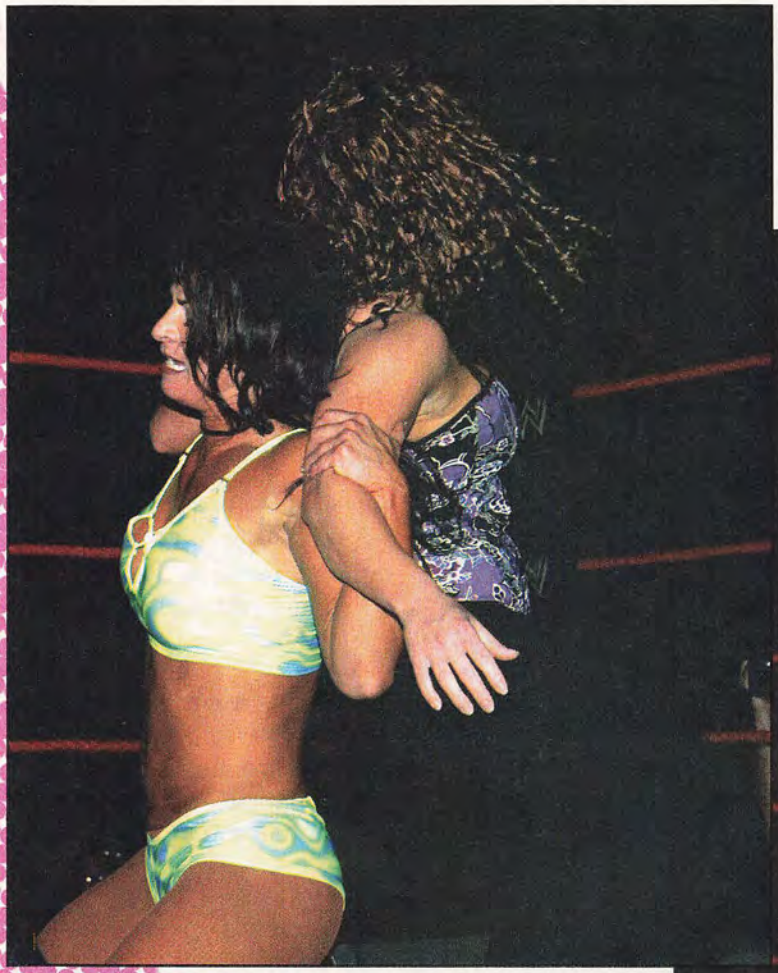
EDGE: I wouldn't call it that. I just mean that Triple-H was correct in realizing that the only person who was going to look out for him was, well, Triple-H. Chris is a friend. You know, he'll drive me to the airport or buy me lunch, things like that. But he's not going to look out for me career-wise. That's not his job. His job is to prove his dominance over everyone else, including me. As a fellow competitor, my job is to take that belt someday. If that places me and Chris on a collision course, then so be it. That's what intense competition is all about. And when it comes to intensity, I won't take a backseat to anybody, including Chris Benoit. □



Two years ago, Edge pinned Eddie Guerrero at the second-biggest pay-per-view of the year, SummerSlam. Look at where Guerrero is today. Before being drafted by Raw, Edge was looking forward to challenging "Latino Heat" for the Smackdown title. Now it's Benoit whom he wants one-on-one.

VICTORIA: FUN AND FRIENDLY...

AND MORE DANGEROUS THAN EVER!



Maybe Molly Holly thought the fan-friendly Victoria was a weaker Victoria ... for a while. But since having her head after a humiliating loss to Victoria at WrestleMania, and since being outclassed by her on the mat since then (above and right), she realizes Victoria is no less dangerous.

By Frank Krewda

PICTURE THIS: YOUR boss calls you into the office on Monday morning and says that even though you're doing a swell job, he or she has a few tips that could make you an even better employee.

But there is a catch: Instead of acting like a rational, responsible adult, you must now make obscene and controversial pronouncements in the office. And under no circumstances can you arrive to work on time or leave at the same time as everyone else. In short, you'll have to become the exact opposite of who and what you are. Forget about everything that worked well for you in the past.

WWE women's champion Victoria was asked to do no less than that a

Victoria learned how to be mean and evil when she was the queen of the Bashams' Revolution group in OVW ... and she loved it (above). Her personality became a lot more bizarre when she hooked up with Steven Richards in WWE (below). Now we're just seeing a different side of her.

few months ago. Eager to cash in on the fans' apparent love affair with the raven-haired beauty, WWE scrapped the manic gesticulations, eerie ring entrance, and association with bizarre and less-than-upstanding characters like Steven Richards. In their place, WWE and Victoria inserted a sexy jiggle, kisses for ringside youths, a lot more smiles, and a heroic crusade against WWE's most heinous female villains.

In an age of fascination with the makeover, few have fascinated like Victoria's character—and for good reason. WWE fans have always spotted something to like about Victoria, no matter how deranged she behaved or who stood across the ring from her. It seemed that no matter how vile her antics were, WWE fans kinda wanted to like her.

Well, it only took about 18 months before WWE realized Victoria could broaden its heights, not to mention her own, with a more upbeat, fan-friendly image. And lately, Victoria has played her new image to perfection ... with great results.

Fans may still salivate over Stacy Keibler's legs and roar at Nidia's naivete, but Victoria's touched up character has pushed her into a class of her own when it comes to fan support. There's no doubt that the rump-shakin' and high-fivin' Victoria is much more accessible and entertaining to the fans than the mysterious mental case that marched to the ring with the backdrop of a seeing hand and turned to Richards for help winning matches and psyching out her opponents in some of the strangest ways possible.

"Few of her WWE counterparts know for certain whether Victoria's new fan-friendly patina is kindness or weakness. Those who bet on the latter are bound to find out the hard way that her new image is exactly that—image. On the mat, Victoria remains just asresolute, committed, versatile, and skilled as she was before her makeover."

"I think the new Victoria is a lot more fun for everyone," Lita told *PWI*. "It's hard work walking around confused and angry all the time. It wasn't much fun for our fans.

We all remember well the psychotic Victoria who targeted Trish Stratus upon joining WWE in 2002, and how she would do anything to win. That Victoria is not gone. She's just hidden beneath a prettier exterior.

Maybe she didn't realize it for the longest time, but I don't think Victoria liked it all that much, either. But her transformation has been pretty remarkable."

Just as remarkable is what *hasn't* changed about Victoria. She no longer squeezes her head in painful confusion or makes strange, contorted faces, but the fighting spirit and close-to-the-edge mentality she exhibited during her early days in WWE are never that far off.

Victoria realizes that her success is equally predicated on intimidating and physically dominating her opponents as it is on whipping up fan support. Her ability to turn the switch on and off is the primary reason she was able to retain the women's title for so long during her most recent reign, until Trish pinned Lita to win the title in a fatal four-way match at Bad Blood, the kind of match that is hardly fair to any champion.

Now that she's working extra hard to maintain that edge, Victoria, ironically enough, has become more dangerous than ever, which gives her as good a chance at winning the women's gold as any other female competitor, if not a better one.

What gives Victoria the edge? Her unpredictability, for starters. Few of her WWE counterparts know for certain whether Victoria's new fan-friendly patina is kindness or weakness. Those who bet on the latter are bound to find out the hard way that her new image is exactly that—image. On the mat, Victoria remains just as resolute, committed, versatile, and skilled as she was before her makeover.

"Everything has changed and nothing has changed. I know—that sounds like something the old Victoria might say," she chuckled. "But it's true. My new image is more consistent with my personality. I'm a real high-energy, outgoing person. But my job in the ring hasn't changed and never will. I still have to go out there and win matches, no matter how many fans I kiss. Nobody backs a loser, so if I'm not wrestling at my hardest, doing everything and anything I can to win, then my new image is worthless."

Like so many pit bulls, Victoria has been bred to compete and attack. Opponents that underestimate her or equate her new image with weakness will still feel her bite. Skimpier, sexier ring attire and a bright smile can't wash away the fighting spirit or superlative talent that fuels this determined diva—especially when the stakes are high. Still, the enthusiasm Victoria displays to her fans is infectious. What fan could not help but grin as Victoria shaved every last hair off the head of Molly Holly at WrestleMania XX?

"The way I look at it," Victoria explained, "I won't allow myself to lose. I work too hard to accept anything other than winning. So why not have some fun with it? Of course I enjoyed shaving Molly's head, and I enjoy it each and every time I rip one of those silly wigs off her head. If my opponents believe I'm any less serious today when I step into the ring than I was two years ago, they can just ask Molly. I think she still takes me pretty seriously." □

Gail Kim falls victim to Victoria's widow's peak. That finisher is no doubt every bit as devastating as it was when Victoria first introduced it to WWE fans when she was a heel.

RESHAPING THE SPORT

SIX SIDES TO TNA'S SIX-SIDED RING

X division wrestlers like Hector Garza and Frankie Kazarian will be able to spend hours upon hours coming up with innovative new moves and series of moves that take advantage of the six-sided TNA ring.

Photos by Vern Verna

By Harry Burkett

WHAT WOULD HAPPEN to pro football if the NFL suddenly decided to have five quarters per game? What would happen to the NBA if the league decided to raise the basket by two feet? What would happen to Major League Baseball if players were given up to four strikes and not just three?

Purists of any of those games would cry foul! A subtle modification to the rulebook can change the outcome of an entire game. The basic dynamic of the sport can be changed.

The same is true of pro wrestling. And, rightly so, changes to the rulebook—or the field of play—have been met with great resistance. It's no surprise that TNA's recent decision to hold all of its matches in a six-sided ring—both on pay-per-view and Fox Sports Net's Impact broadcast—has angered many traditionalists. Continuing with the baseball analogy, this is akin to adding a fourth base between third and home plate!

In this feature, we examine six sides to the six-sided ring controversy. Consider the perspectives, weigh the facts, and decide whether TNA's latest innovation is a good idea. You be the judge!

1. THE X DIVISION PERSPECTIVE. Obviously, the idea to switch from traditional four-corner ring to the six-sided ring is to enhance the action in the X division. TNA officials believe the high-flying X division is the company's primary edge over WWE. Considering that 55-year-old Chavo Guerrero Sr. recently reigned as the cruiserweight champ for Smackdown, it has become obvious that WWE never has—and likely never will—put much serious effort into its cruiserweight division. WWE seems to have made a conscious effort to make cruiserweights inferior to the heavyweights.

But TNA has learned from WCW's example. WCW introduced the term "cruiserweight" to American wrestling, trying to avoid the stigma already attached to light and junior heavyweights. TNA officials insist they wouldn't mind if the X division championship is viewed on par with the NWA heavyweight title someday.

"The six-sided ring just serves to make an already breathtaking division even better," commented TNA announcer Mike Tenay. "Chain wrestling has always been associated with heavyweight mat grappling, but the six-sided ring in a sense allows high-flyers to link moves. They can follow a flying headscissors from the top rope with a basic moonsault, and then bounce off another turnbuckle with a 450 splash. The turnbuckles are closer together, thereby offering X division wrestlers more springboards for their moves."

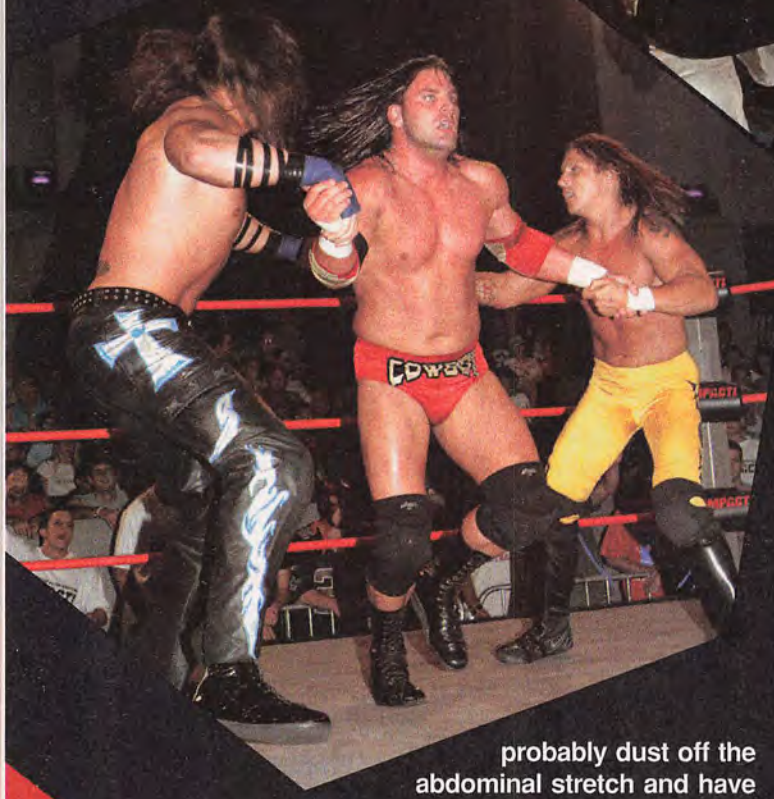
TNA wrestlers are excited by the changes, too. The most obvious example is former NWA heavyweight champ A.J. Styles, who returned to the X title. division and immediately captured the X title. Former WWE superstar Jeff Hardy recently made his TNA debut against Styles, making the division an even hotter place to be.

2. THE HEAVYWEIGHT PERSPECTIVE. The initial reaction to the six-sided ring was that X division wrestlers would receive a boost at the expense of heavyweight talent. What possible benefit could heavyweight wrestlers gain from a six-sided ring with more turnbuckles? Side headlocks don't need additional springboards. The heavyweights would seem unathletic in comparison.

"You'd be surprised at how much the six-sided ring will

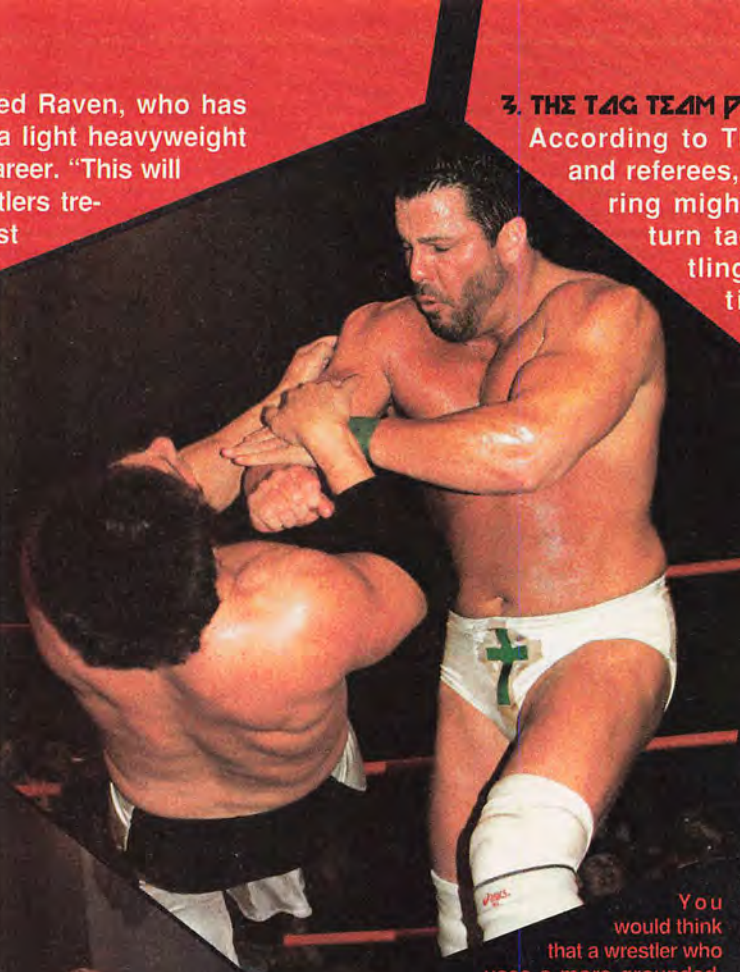
help the heavyweights," offered Raven, who has wrestled prominently as both a light heavyweight and a heavyweight during his career. "This will help the submission-style wrestlers tremendously. What's the biggest complaint that shooters-turned-wrestlers have? They complain because it's too easy to reach the ropes, especially since a TNA ring is smaller than a WWE ring, for example. If I get some poor soul in an STF, they have no place to go, no ropes to reach. And fans love that no-nonsense style. I could probably dust off the abdominal stretch and have guys crying like babies in the middle of that six-sided ring."

If Kid Kash and Dallas (below) remain a team, they'll need to rethink their approach to tag team wrestling just a bit. The same will be true of any duo in TNA.



Following the logic of Raven's analysis, two distinct wrestling styles could develop in TNA: the submission-based style of the heavyweights, and the daredevil action of X division wrestlers. In that sense, the six-sided ring should play to the strengths of both heavier and lighter wrestlers—and TNA will able to offer a bit of variety in its matches.

3. THE TAG TEAM PERSPECTIVE. According to TNA wrestlers and referees, the six-sided ring might actually return tag team wrestling to its traditional roots. Most wrestlers and referees agree that six- and eight-man X division competition has led to greater leniency in tag team matches. In other words, referees find it almost impossible to control the action because wrestlers are constantly entering the ring without any regard as to who is the legal man.



You would think that a wrestler who uses a more grounded, "heavyweight" style such as Pat Kenney wouldn't be able to use the six-sided ring to his advantage. And you might just be wrong.

The six-sided ring should add some additional space between the dueling corners. While double-team action will be faster-paced and offer more innovative possibilities, it will be more difficult for a struggling wrestler to reach across and make the tag—and it will be a bit easier for a referee to maintain control. Years ago, tags were harder to make because rings tended to be larger. TNA officials and wrestlers agree that the six-sided ring, if it can reduce the chance of all four men being in the ring simultaneously, can enhance tag team wrestling.

4. THE REFEREE'S PERSPECTIVE. As mentioned earlier, the referees will be able to exercise more control in conventional tag team matches because the six-sided rings will further separate the opposing sides. But the six-sided ring will offer some frightening possibilities for referees: not only three- and four-way tag team matches, but, incredibly, five-way and six-way tag team matches. That means as many as 12 wrestlers could be involved in a given tag match.

The referees will also find X division matches to be much more challenging. With two additional corners, referees will have a harder time trying to predict which set of turnbuckles a given wrestler

will use as a springboard. Unfortunately for the zebras, they can look forward to more collisions with wrestlers, resulting in injuries and more questionable calls. The days of Dick Woerhle and Dick Kroll staying out of camera range and away from the action are over. TNA referees are now in the line of fire.

5. THE PHOTOGRAPHER'S PERSPECTIVE. PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED'S photographers will now be in the line of fire, too. No, we don't mean that as a joke, but as an honest assessment of the photographer's perspective ... and that of fans. Photographers will have a more difficult time keeping track of the action and are likely to miss some key shots ... and fans, too, are likely to miss a lot if they're not paying attention.

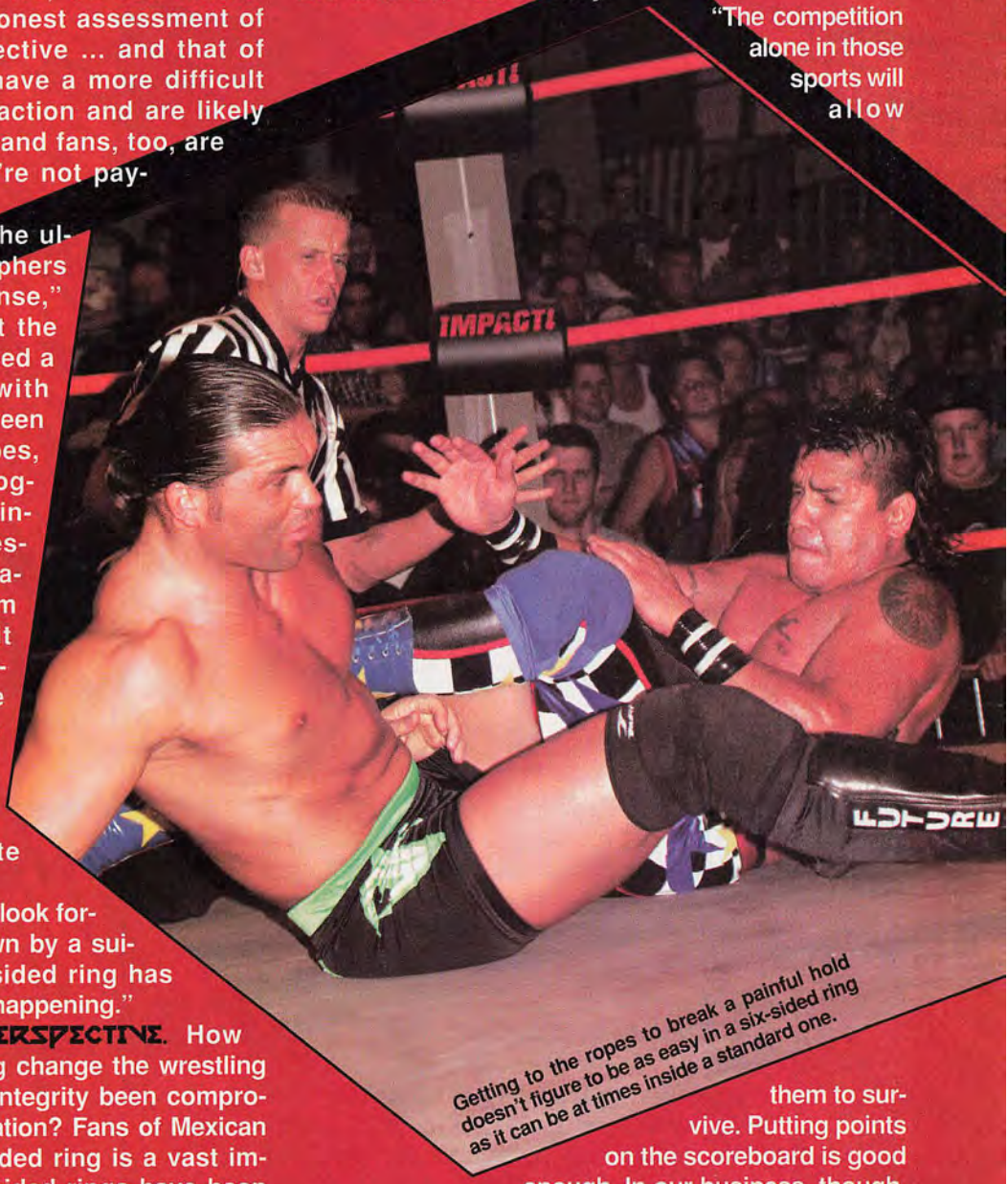
"The four-sided ring is the ultimate canvas for photographers with any kind of artistic sense," said Vern Verna, who shot the first show in which TNA used a six-sided ring. "Before, with the correct positioning between the bottom and middle ropes, and the proper lens, photographers could almost get inside the ring with the wrestlers. And, if print photographers are having a problem with the six-sided ring, it will be challenging for videographers as well. The six-sided ring won't be as television-friendly as the four-sided rings. More wide-view shots will take the place of more intimate shots inside the ring."

Added Verna: "I also don't look forward to getting knocked down by a suicide plancha, and the six-sided ring has increased the chance of that happening."

6. THE HISTORIAN'S PERSPECTIVE. How much does the six-sided ring change the wrestling game? Has pro wrestling's integrity been compromised by TNA's latest innovation? Fans of Mexican wrestling will say the six-sided ring is a vast improvement. After all, eight-sided rings have been used in Mexico, and the octagon has become the preferred arena of combat in ultimate fighting. Ultimo Dragon's Toryumon, which promotes in both Mexico and Japan, utilizes a six-sided ring.

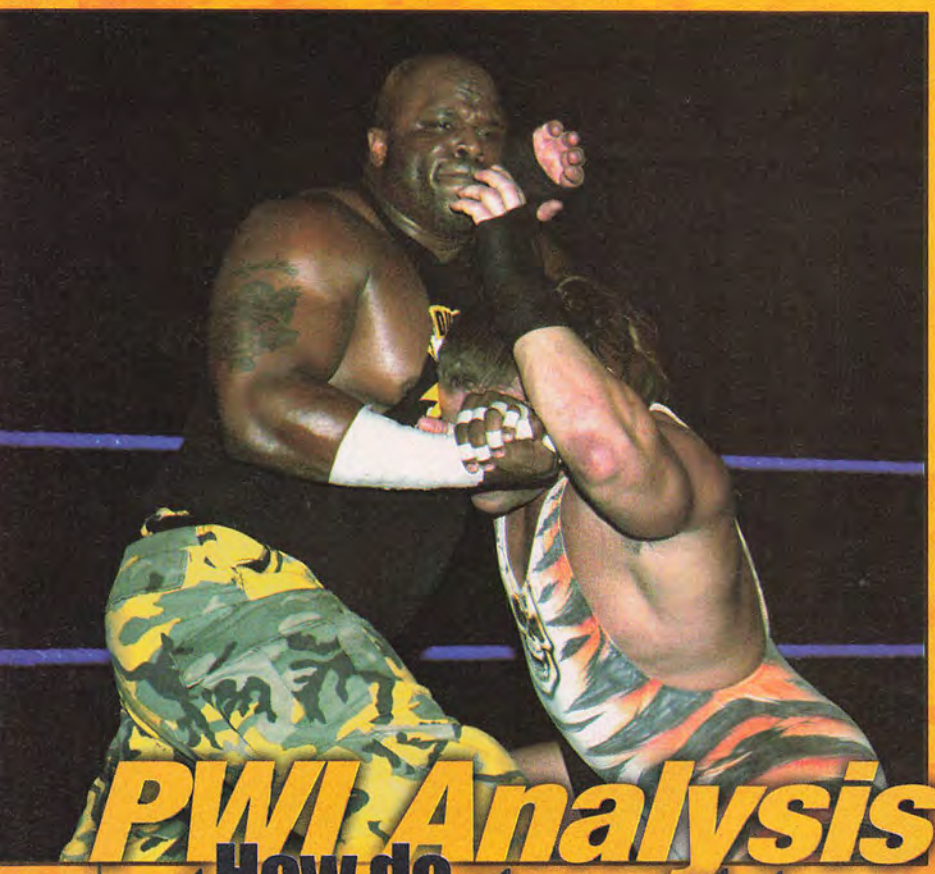
Also consider the innovations that have occurred in American wrestling over the past 100 years. Best-of-three-falls matches used to be the standard fare, and they have—quite appropriately—given way to single-fall matches. Purists complained when Harley Race was forced to defend the NWA World title against Ric Flair inside a steel cage—and world title cage matches became commonplace after that. There was a time when a world champion could save his title by dumping his opponent over the top rope. If that were still the case, Jeff Jarrett would have been NWA champion for all of the past two years!

"Wrestling isn't like other sports such as baseball and football," said Tenay. "The competition alone in those sports will allow them to survive. Putting points on the scoreboard is good enough. In our business, though, the wrestlers' primary job is to entertain, and wrestling must constantly change and be innovative in order to accomplish that. If wrestling doesn't evolve, it will die."



Getting to the ropes to break a painful hold doesn't figure to be as easy in a six-sided ring as it can be at times inside a standard one.

TNA, in its determination to stay in business, might be partly responsible for wrestling's future survival. That will definitely true, especially if—years from now—*all* wrestlers are competing in six-sided rings. □



It was following the Dudleys' victory over Rob Van Dam and Rey Misterio Jr. that Paul Heyman challenged them to really step it up. That's not easy for a team that has accomplished so much. But there's still work for them to do to cement their legacy.

PWI Analysis

How do the Dudleys rate against the greatest teams ever?

By Dan Murphy

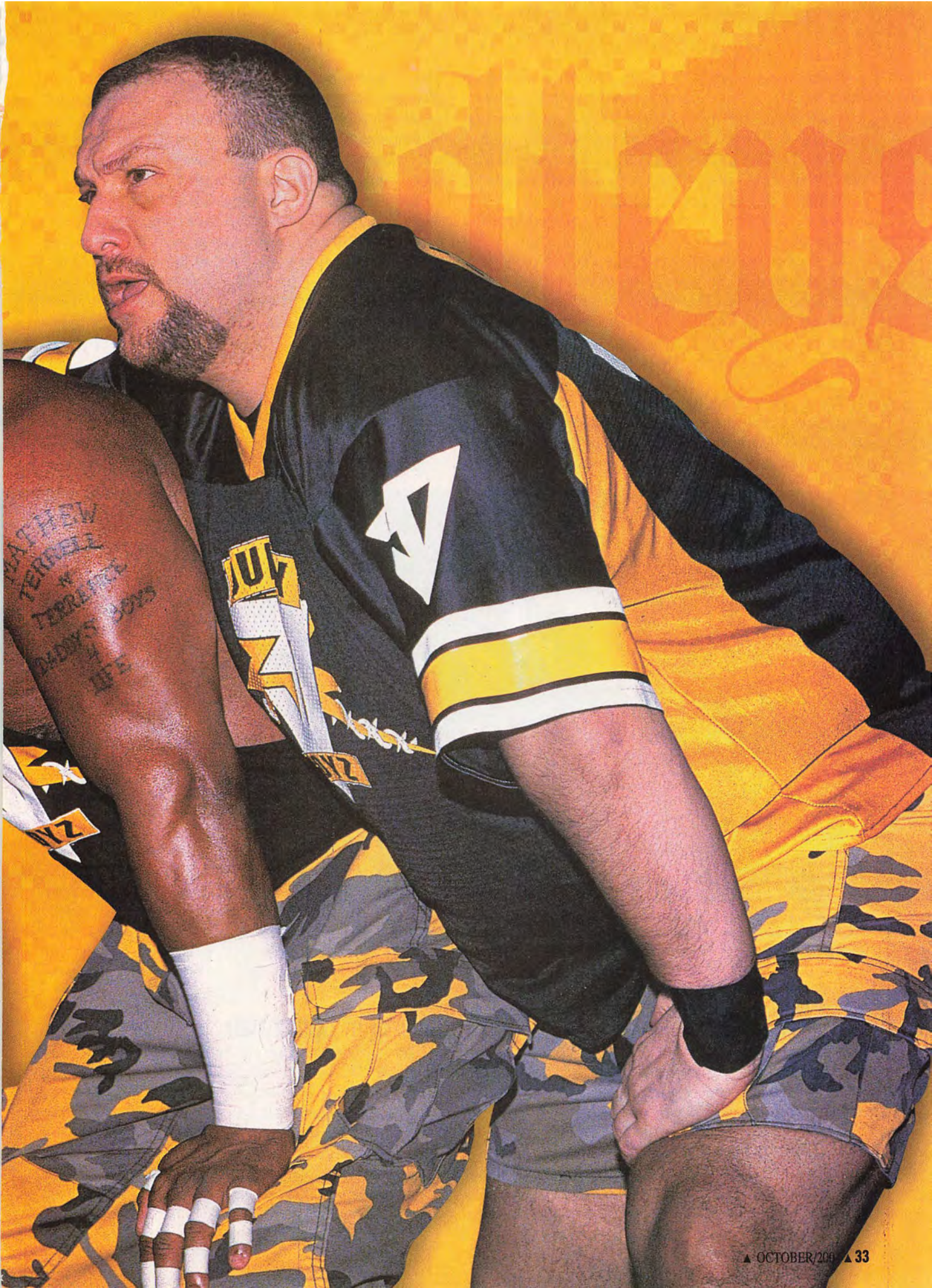
WHEN YOU LOOK at them on paper, the accomplishments of Buh Buh Ray and D-Von Dudley are truly staggering.

Eight ECW World tag team titles, nine WWE World tag titles (counting one Smackdown tag title), and they were the last WCW World tag champs in the promotion's history.

Take a moment to put those titles in perspective. To date, Buh Buh Ray and D-Von have held more world tag titles than legendary teams The Road Warriors, The British Bulldogs, the Steiners, and The Midnight Express—*combined!*

But does quantity of championships alone provide the measure of a great tag team?

That's a question we started to consider on the night Paul Heyman challenged the Dudleys to elevate their performances, to reach for that next level of superstardom. We



wondered what exactly he meant. Other than piling up more tag team championships, what else can the Dudleys do? WWE tried splitting them up two years ago, and while Buh Buh Ray was a solid mid-card singles wrestler for Raw, his half-brother bombed as Reverend D-Von with Smackdown. They were quickly reunited, and WWE is unlikely to try that experiment again.

So, number of title wins aside, just how good are the Dudleys?

Most wrestling experts would say the true glory days of tag team wrestling were 1986 through 1993, when teams like The Hart Foundation, The British Bulldogs, The Rock 'n' Roll Express, The Road Warriors, The Midnight Express, Tully Blanchard and Arn Anderson, The Rockers, Steiners, Doom, Demolition, and The Freebirds hit their prime.

The Dudleys didn't start teaming until 1996, when almost all of those elite teams had disintegrated. Buh Buh and D-Von never had a chance to match up with the sport's best teams, and for that reason, it's difficult to say in 2004 whether history will remember the Dudleys as a great team, or if they will go down as merely the best and most enduring team in an era of mostly makeshift tandems.

In this exclusive categorical analysis, we compare The Dudley Boyz to some of wrestling's all-time great tandems to try to answer that very question.

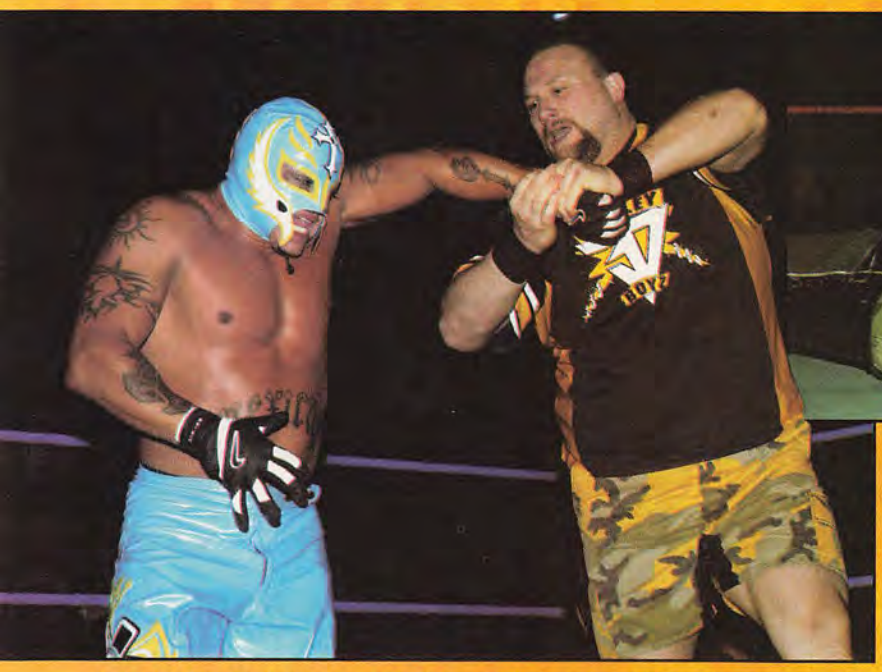
championships

Clearly, the Dudleys have won more than their share of titles over the years. *A lot* more. If titles were the only criterion for greatness, their legacy would be complete. They'd be the best ever. However, in this day and age, championship glory is fleeting. Titles change hands with greater frequency than they did 10 to 20 years ago. Champions are expected to defend their titles almost every week on *Raw* or *Smackdown,* with pay-per-views taking place every four to eight weeks.

To their credit, Buh Buh and D-Von have won titles in every promotion in which they have competed as a twosome, but titles are easier to come by in 2004 than they were in 1990. And even with all those title victories, they're still not seen as a truly dominant team. For every title win, there is a title loss. The Dudleys have never been able to create that aura of invincibility that teams like the Road Warriors, Steiners, and (to a lesser extent) Demolition built.

durability

This is another category in which the Dudleys excel. Other than when the WWE brand extension-necessitated a split in 2002, the Dudleys have been a cohesive team for eight years. They have managed to avoid the petty conflicts that destroyed teams like the Rock 'n' Rolls, Steiners, Rockers, and others. The Dudleys have been intensely loyal to each other. They are not concerned about individual glory. Both Buh Buh and D-Von are committed to being the best team they can be, and that is a hallmark of a truly great duo.



Buh Buh Ray isn't likely to get another shot at making it big on his own, so what can he do to build on what he thinks is the Dudleys' legend? Somehow find a great team with which to feud would be a good (though unlikely) start.

It only looks like D-Von is dozing off in mid-match here, although it would be hard to blame if he occasionally had trouble motivating himself. Maybe a long feud with The Undertaker will be fruitful.

quality of opposition

This is where the Dudleys falter. Other than their epic feuds with The Hardy Boyz and Edge and Christian, two terrific teams that just weren't together long enough, the Dudleys have mostly fed on a diet of forgettable teams. In ECW, they warred with Public Enemy and The Pit Bulls—competent but one-dimensional brawling teams. They also feuded with the team of Rob Van Dam and Sabu, but as good a team as that was, it was always an uneasy alliance between the two.

The truly great teams have always had truly great opponents. The Hart Foundation had The British Bulldogs. The Midnights had the Rock 'n' Rolls and Tully and Arn. The Road Warriors had The Freebirds and Koloffs.

The Dudleys? They've had Lance Storm and William Regal and La Resistance, Spike Dudley and Mahoney and The Gangstas. Clearly, that's a big step down in quality. If only Edge and Christian and the Hardys had stuck together …

It's not the Dudleys' fault, of course, but they're having the same problem that retired former heavyweight boxing champion Lennox Lewis used to have. Without excellent opponents, they have a hard time proving that they are excellent champions.

originality

With their painted faces, inhuman physiques, and spiked shoulder pads, Hawk and Animal were a bolt from the blue on the wrestling scene. No one had ever seen anything like them before. Same with Rick Morton and Robert Gibson, whose teenybopper appeal drew teenage girls to arenas in droves. The Dudleys don't have superhuman physiques. They don't have daredevil, high-flying moves, or a ton of particularly innovative moves. They're very solid and consistent, but to be honest, they look like dozens of other teams before them. In fact, it wouldn't take much imagination to see them competing 20, 30, or even 40 years ago. While they're best known for putting opponents through tables, Johnny Grunge and Rocco Rock were doing the same thing long before the Dudleys were on the scene. They may be effective, but they're not exactly original.

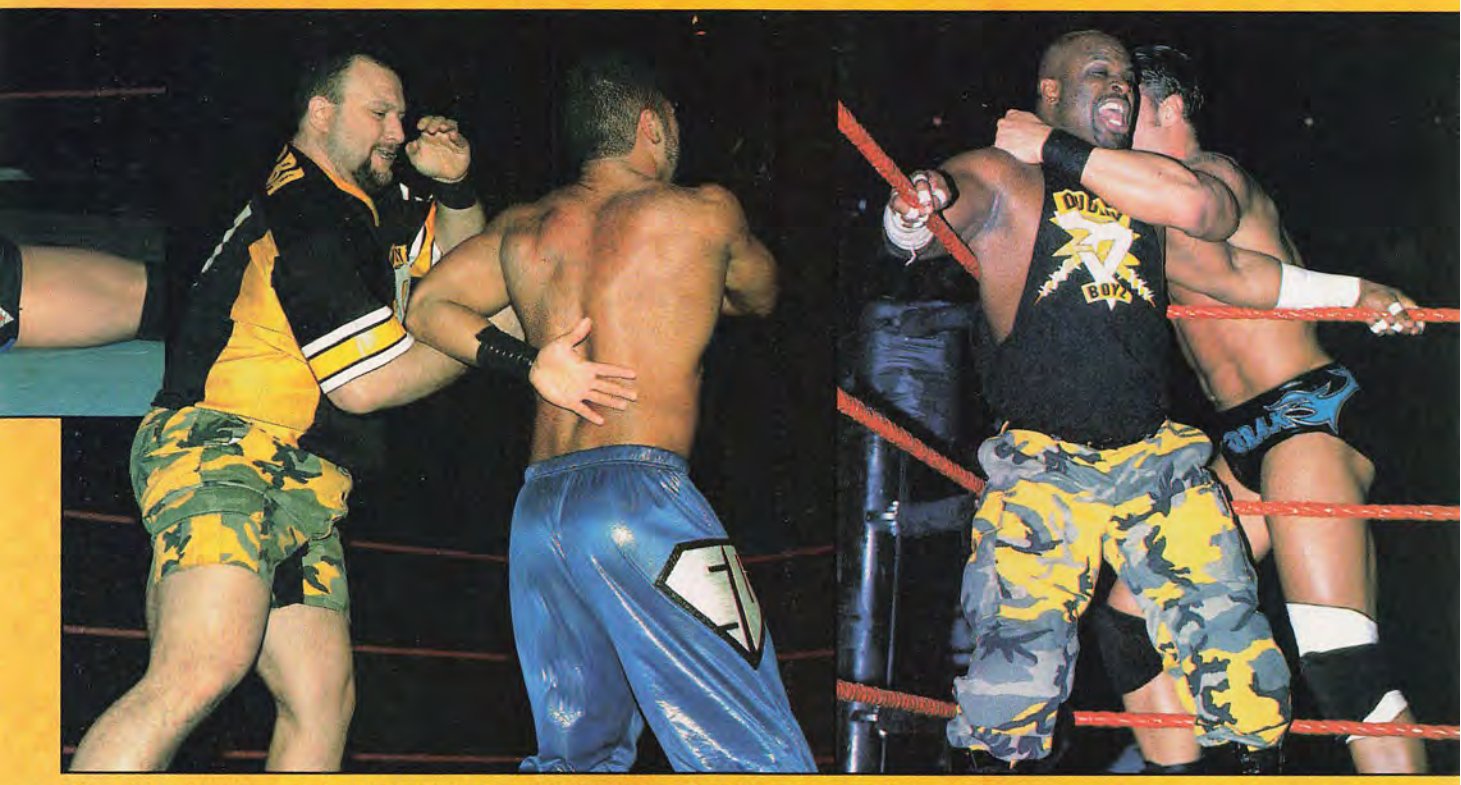
influence

Many great teams have spawned legions of shameless imitators. We don't see many teams you could consider Dudley ripoffs. Maybe that's because the Dudleys are a no-frills, classically styled brawling team, cut from the same cloth as Crusher and Bruiser and The Nasty Boys. Buh Buh and D-Von just don't have the flash and panache as many of the other great teams. But substance is more important than style … isn't it?

the verdict

No one can—or would—deny that The Dudley Boyz are a tremendous tag team. They are the only duo ever to win the modern-day Triple Crown of WWE, WCW, and ECW world tag titles. They're dangerous, they're very successful and resilient … but they just seem to be on the cusp of that all-time great level.

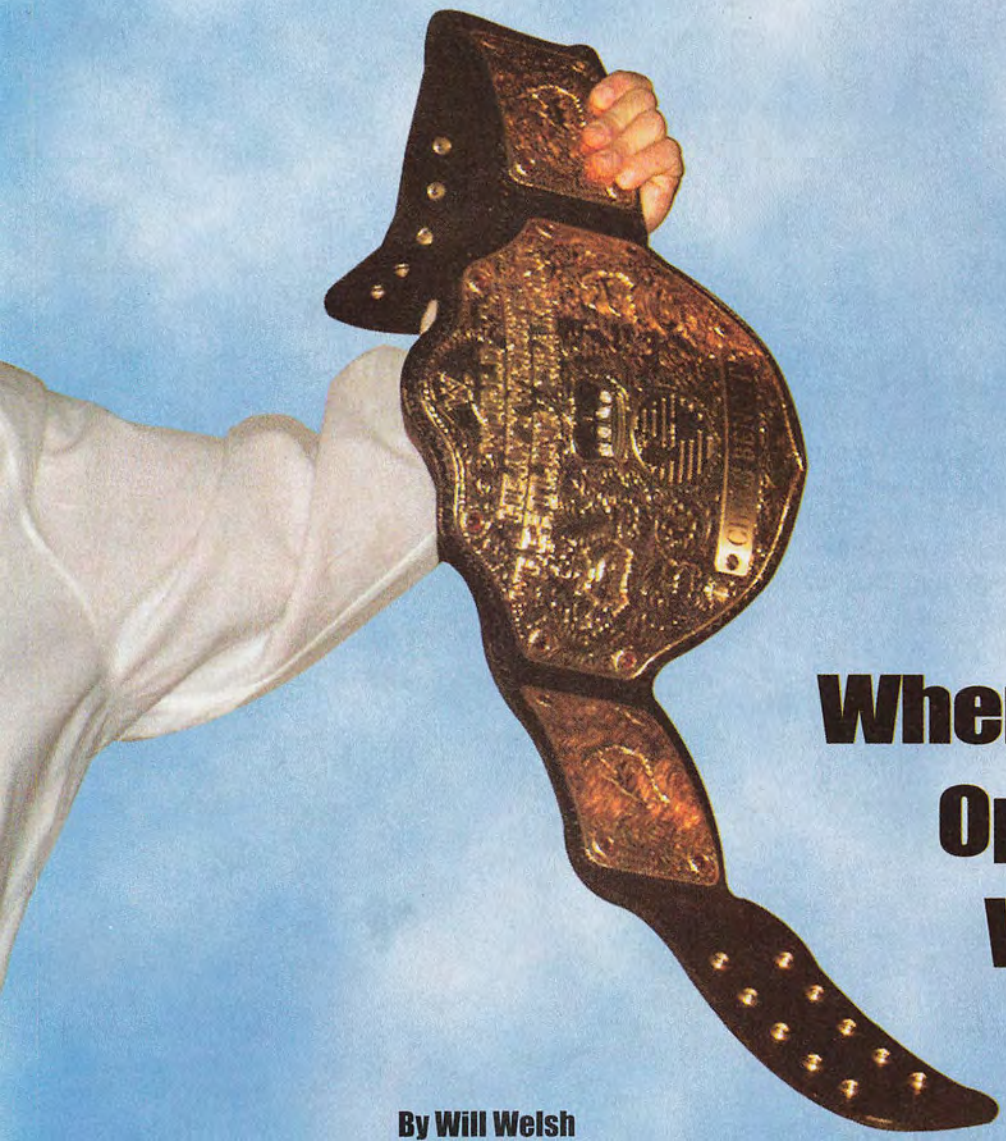
The Dudleys are tied up in a feud with The Undertaker. If they can withstand "The Dead Man" … if they can remain near the top of Smackdown for another couple of years … if they can survive another major rivalry against another strong tandem (a big "if" that they can't control) … maybe then The Dudley Boyz will be mentioned in the same breath as the Harts, the Bulldogs, and the Steiners. □



Determining just where Buh Buh Ray (above) and D-Von (above right) belong in the pantheon of all-time greats is so difficult. They might not have faced the greatest competition night in and night out over the last eight years, but they can't be faulted for that. And who's to say they wouldn't have shined had they come along, say, 15 years earlier?

TAG TEAM
CHAMPIONS

EUGENE: THE IMPOSSIBLE DREAM



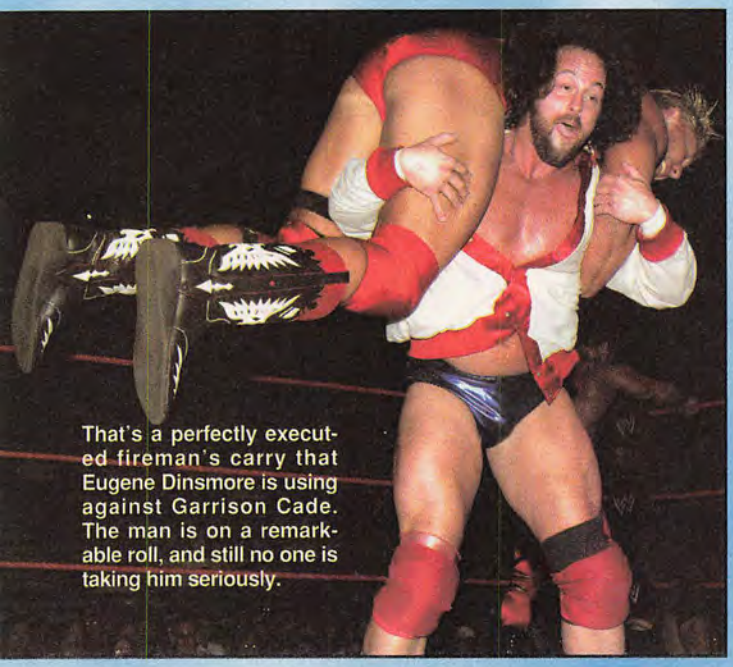
When Will His Opponents Wake Up?

By Will Welsh

EUGENE HAS BEEN with WWE since this spring, when he debuted at the side of William Regal at the behest of his "uncle," Eric Bischoff. At first, Eugene appeared to be a wrestler capable of little more than comic relief, a simple chap whose sole purpose wasn't to go out there and win a championship or become the star of the show, but to entertain in as limited a role as possible.

The fact that his slow but friendly manner immediately made him one of Raw's most popular wrestlers was a bonus that not even Vince McMahon could have anticipated.

However, while WWE fans were busy chanting Eugene's name, his fellow Raw



That's a perfectly executed fireman's carry that Eugene Dinsmore is using against Garrison Cade. The man is on a remarkable roll, and still no one is taking him seriously.

wrestlers were giving him quite a different reception. While they had never met *Eugene* before, many had met the man behind Eugene or, at the very least, they had heard of him. Nick Dinsmore, the eight-time former Ohio Valley Wrestling heavyweight champion, had earned solid respect since signing a WWE developmental contract years earlier. Known as "Mr. Wrestling," he had a hand in training such WWE stars as John Cena and Batista, among numerous others. He was the man to whom virtually every WWE developmental wrestler looked when it came time to learn some of the finer points of technical wrestling.

For all of Dinsmore's considerable in-ring talents, though, he never made it out of WWE's developmental system himself because WWE considered him too bland to invest a roster spot in. Save for a few appearances on *WWE Velocity,* he was forced to watch other OVW wrestlers whom he still considered green leapfrog him to the big time.

Enter Eugene, Dinsmore's charming alter-ego. At first, many of Eugene's new roster mates didn't know what to think of him. Even La Resistance member Rob Conway, with whom Dinsmore had captured a staggering nine OVW Southern tag team championships, was stunned by his former partner's transformation. When he found out that he would be wrestling Eugene in Eugene's first match on *Raw,* he didn't know if he should treat the match seriously or laugh it off.

Conway eventually chose to do the latter—and he wound up with a notch in his loss column to show for it. And he stopped laughing.

After that match was over, Conway was reportedly overheard telling friends, "I don't know what happened, except that I couldn't help but relax when I saw Eugene come out. If I saw a glimmer of Nick in Eugene, maybe I would've wrestled differently, but that's not Nick out there. I swear, it's not! It's like a completely different person!"

"Eugene or Nick or whatever you're calling him—the man isn't stupid," said *PWI's* WWE analyst, Thomas Pilliard. "He's done his research and he knows that something like this can work. Remember, it wasn't long ago that Spike Dudley was beating men two to three times his size despite being as loony as Roger Rabbit. One big reason for that was Spike was able to lull them into thinking he wasn't dangerous, which is exactly what Eugene's doing right now. He's so convincing that they can't help but believe he's somehow become this person they'd rather take pity on than wrestle in a serious match."

"Convincing" is a word that comes up a lot when discussing Eugene, as it should. Since his debut on WWE TV, not one person we've contacted has seen Eugene be anyone but ... well, Eugene. It doesn't matter if it's in the ring, backstage, or in a hotel lobby—everyone with whom we've talked reports that if Dinsmore is acting, he's acting 100 percent of the time.

"I've never seen anything like it," said one WWE

"Eugene is slowly ascending the WWE rankings. Win a few more matches and he'll be in line for a shot at the Intercontinental title. Win more than a few more matches and Chris Benoit, Shawn Michaels, and Triple-H better start breaking down videotapes of his matches."

Eugene hasn't shown a desire to pursue the WWE Intercontinental or Raw title, though we're certain he'd love to win one of those belts. If he keeps winning, title shots will have to come his way.

Nick Dinsmore was showing Al Snow a thing or two about mat wrestling in OVW four years ago (below). He also won nine OVW Southern tag titles with Rob Conway (right). Even Conway couldn't look at him as a threat when they wrestled on *Raw* in the spring.

wrestler who spoke to *PWI* on condition of anonymity. "Sometimes it's said that wrestlers become their characters, but this is so far and away beyond that concept that it's scary."

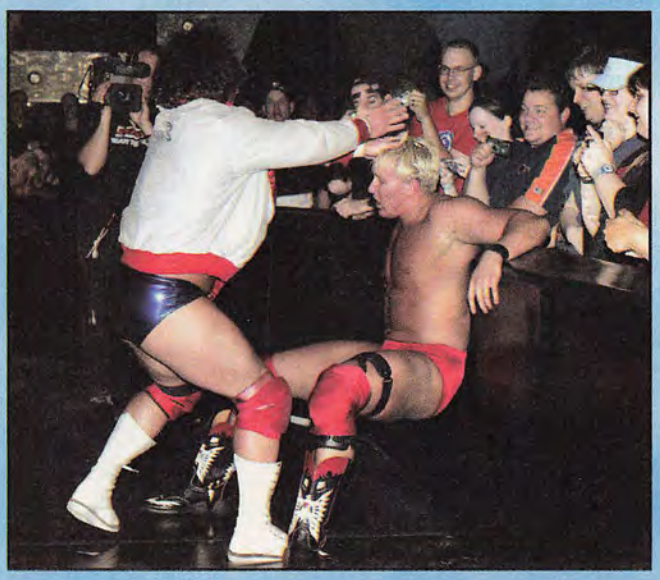
As for our efforts to unearth Dinsmore, we have to admit that we've also failed. We call the Dinsmore home only to get Eugene's voice on the answering machine. We run into him backstage and he acts like he's meeting us for the first time. We watch him from around a corner when he can't possibly know that anyone is watching him and he's still behaving exactly like Eugene! The only person who might know the whole truth is William Regal, and he seems to believe that Eugene is exactly who he says he is. Why else would he be so protective of the young man? Regal certainly hasn't earned a reputation for being compassionate throughout his career.

Whatever the case, Eugene's opponents don't believe they have any reason to think that he's anyone but Eugene—and they're preparing for matches with him with that thought in mind, which means that they're hardly preparing for matches against him at all. Despite a few big wins, Eugene isn't viewed as a legitimate threat to any one wrestler's future or any of Raw's championships. His fellow wrestlers still view him as an oddity, a sideshow attraction, and not much more. Maybe they feel like they can't even give the appearance of taking him seriously for fear of being laughed at by their fellow superstars.

Of course, maybe that's what Dinsmore is aiming for. He's putting together a scintillating win-loss record against some of WWE's best wrestlers with a character that WWE fans have come to adore. Eugene is slowly ascending the WWE rankings. Win a few more matches and he'll be in line for a shot at the Intercontinental title. Win more than a few more matches and Chris Benoit, Shawn Michaels, and Triple-H better start breaking down videotapes of his matches. After a recent tag team victory with Benoit as his partner, Eugene proudly paraded around the ring with Benoit's Raw belt in hand. It was a funny moment, but could it possibly have been a sign of things to come? Could Eugene really make it all the way to the top of this mountain?

Keep in mind that it wasn't all that long ago that Dinsmore was wrestling for Ohio Valley Wrestling and looking at a full-time gig with WWE's main roster as an impossible dream. If his opponents are willing to let this dream keep going, he'll gladly continue to play the role of whacked-out sandman. And he'll be glad to do it with a shiny gold belt strapped around his waist. □

Fans everywhere just love everything about Eugene. They'd probably love him even more as Raw champion. An impossible dream? We're starting to think it's not!



the business page

By Harry Burkett

Only a heartbeat away ... No one stood behind a podium and announced, "I am in control," as then-Secretary of State Alexander Haig mistakenly did after President Ronald Reagan was rushed to the hospital following an assassination attempt in March 1981, but the line of succession had to be a consideration when WWE employees learned that Chairman Vince McMahon was about to spend a few days in the hospital back in June.

Although McMahon's condition wasn't life-threatening, Vinnie Mac wasn't relaxing at the Connecticut Medical Center (often featured on WWE TV during the "Attitude" era) as part of a storyline. McMahon was diagnosed with diverticulitis, an infection in a pocket-like opening in a weak part of the wall between the bowel and the colon. Patients develop pain in the lower left part of the abdomen and experience symptoms such as fever, nausea, vomiting, painful urination, or constipation. A liquid diet and oral antiobiotics are the first modes of attack against diverticulitis, although a colonoscopy is sometimes recommended within a few weeks.

Although Vince McMahon's life wasn't in danger when he was hospitalized with diverticulitis in June, there had to be some thought given to the line of succession in WWE. Fear not—Sable isn't part of it.

This episode brings to light a previously unmentionable topic inside WWE, one that has often been brushed aside because of McMahon's incredible physical condition and relatively young age, 58: What would happen if the chairman became seriously ill or, even worse, died unexpectedly? With so many premature deaths of former WWE superstars on the minds of many, one has to assume that the company has a plan of succession—or at least contingency plans—if the worst should happen.

As far as The Great American Bash was concerned (Vinnie Mac was unable to attend, but he did stay in touch via telephone), Stephanie McMahon, Triple-H, Jim Ross, and Executive Producer Kevin Dunn pulled together to run the pay-per-view in Vince's absence. McMahon went on to miss the following *Raw* and *Smackdown* because his condition prevented him from traveling. At press time, McMahon was reportedly back to feeling great and was ready to travel to and take charge of the TV shows again.

There's no reason to believe that McMahon hasn't considered the succession issue. He is already designing his financial legacy. Only a month before his hospitalization, McMahon placed 6.1 million shares of WWE stock for sale, which was expected to result in cash assets of $70.67-million for his estate-planning vehicle, the Vincent K. McMahon Irrevocable Trust.

So who is likely to be McMahon's successor in a worst-case scenario, or if he simply decides to retire? Linda, his wife and CEO? Shane, his oldest child and only son? Stephanie, whose ambition and drive is similar to her father's? Triple-H, his son-in-law? Or Jim Ross, who was recently promoted to a position as McMahon's right-hand executive? Or would it be a power-sharing scheme involving all of the above and maybe a few others?

We probably won't know the answer until that day comes.

ROH-Feinstein fallout continues ... Five months ago, Douglas Gentry boldly announced that he was the new president of Ring of Honor and RF Video, following ROH co-founder Rob Feinstein's implication in an Internet sex sting. In recent weeks, however, sources inside ROH suggested that Gentry remained friends with Feinstein, and that Feinstein was planning to rejoin the companies within two years or so. Some even suggested he never really stepped away from the companies completely as he insisted he did. Attempting to curb those rumors, and seeking to finally put the entire scandal to rest, ROH investor Cary Silkin gained 100 percent ownership of Ring of Honor and announced the company's split from RF Video on June 29.

The new entity, Ring of Honor Wrestling Inc., is now completely separate from RF Video, and it is unlikely that the two companies will form a relationship in the future. As part of the agreement, both sides agreed not to discuss exactly what happened leading up to the split. ROH employees moved into a new office location, and Silkin announced ROH's Web site, while retaining its old domain name, would be undergoing a relaunch.

He may have lost the Smackdown title to JBL in June, but Eddie Guerrero can still smile about how he has turned his life around. *Entertainment Tonight* was even intrigued by his story.

Eddie Guerrero tells all ... Although Eddie Guerrero's battle with alcohol, recreational drugs, and painkillers was detailed in the one-hour UPN special *Cheating Death, Stealing Life: The Eddie Guerrero Story,* "Latino Heat" discussed his personal demons again on *Entertainment Tonight* in late-June. Guerrero's insights were brutally candid.

"My drug of choice was painkillers and alcohol," he told *ET's* Mark Steines. "I was on Vicodin. I was using 30 to 40 pills a day and I would drink a case of beer a day, but that wouldn't do me. I kind of got immune to that, so then I went to vodka and hit it pretty good."

Under the influence of GHB, otherwise known as liquid ecstasy, Guerrero flipped his car while driving 130 miles per hour on January 1, 1999. Guerrero wasn't expected to survive the first 48 hours, but he overcame a punctured liver, broken hip socket, and fractured collarbone. After he left WCW, WWE forced him into rehab and, when that didn't work, terminated him.

Obviously, Guerrero has made the most of his most recent comeback, including a four-month reign as Smackdown champion.

WWE Stockwatch

(For the period of May 1 to June 30, 2004)

60-Day High: 13.90 on May 3
60-Day Low: 11.50 on May 21
52-Week High: 15.44 on April 2 and 22, 2004
52-Week Low: 9.06 on July 22, 2003

Pay-per-view buy rates and home video sales combined to boost WWE's profits by 20 percent in its fourth fiscal quarter. WWE's net profit of $19.7-million was a great improvement over the $4.2-million loss the company suffered during the same period in 2003. Gross revenue increased to $126.7-million during the three-month period, compared to $105.9-million last year.

WrestleMania XX, the largest-grossing PPV wrestling event of all-time, and the booming DVD market were the driving forces this quarter. The home video business, for example, surged from $3-million in the fourth quarter of 2003 to $11.1-million in 2004. Another reason for the popularity of DVDs, in particular, might be the faster turnaround time between the actual event and the DVD release—a growing trend throughout the entertainment industry.

Despite the good news, WWE projected that its 2005 earnings would fall between $345- and $365-million. According to the Associated Press, those figures are below the average estimate of Wall Street analysts. Those projections were around the $371-million mark.

Who are these experts that analyze WWE? That's hard to say. The drawing power of Eugene has yet to be a topic on Louis Rukeyser's *Wall Street* or the Fox News Channel.

TV breakdown

RAW (Spike TV)

May 10: 3.4
May 17: 4.0
May 24: 3.5
May 31: 3.2
June 7: 3.4
June 14: 3.6
June 21: 4.2
June 28: 3.7

Analysis: Is it the curse of the casual fan? Every time WWE executives become confident in *Raw's* numbers, there is an inexplicable downturn the following week. The lowest-rated program of the past two months was the Memorial Day show, which was to be expected, but it's hard to explain why *Raw* scored ratings of only 3.4 on May 10 and June 7, and reached an impressive 4.2 on June 21. Eugene was in the main event on May 31 (against Kane) and June 21 (against Triple-H). Increasingly, it seems that WWE is dependent upon the whims of casual channel-surfers, not a diehard wrestling fan base. Traditionally, wrestling programs haven't suffered from such wild ratings fluctuations, but since WWE has entered America's mainstream, this is the price the industry must pay.

SMACKDOWN (UPN)

May 6: 2.8
May 13: 3.1
May 20: 2.9
May 27: 2.9
June 3: 3.3
June 10: 3.0
June 17: 3.0

Analysis: *Smackdown* has officially moved into the danger zone, slipping into the same range in which *WCW Thunder* foundered a few years ago. There were too many dips into the "terrible 2s" during this period, with *Smackdown* dropping below 3.0 on May 6, 20, and 27. WWE is focusing on building the Raw brand, which seems to be coming at the expense of Smackdown. Four years ago, *Smackdown* was scoring 4.7 on a regular basis, and it has since dropped by two full broadcast points. The Eddie Guerrero-John Bradshaw Layfield feud raged during this time, so it obviously was not a meaningful rivalry to viewers. The Undertaker's appearance on the June 3 show might have produced a boost, helping *Smackdown* score a 3.3, as he went to a no-contest with Booker T in the main event. If this is the highest-rated show on UPN, it doesn't say much for the rest of the schedule.

VELOCITY (Spike TV)

May 8: 0.5
May 15: 0.5
May 22: 0.4
May 29: 0.5
June 5: 0.6
June 12: 0.5
June 19: 0.5
June 26: 0.5

Analysis: While *Smackdown* might have reached the danger zone, the brand's secondary program—*Velocity*—has reached code blue, the terminal stage. The move from 10 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Saturdays hasn't improved *Velocity's* ratings and, if anything, has made the numbers worse. And to show how devalued championships are in the modern era, Charlie Haas and Rico's Smackdown tag team title defense against Akio and Sakoda failed to boost *Velocity's* overall rating over 0.6.

THE WWE EXPERIENCE (Spike TV)

May 9: 0.7
May 16: 0.5
May 23: 0.5
May 30: 0.5
June 6: 0.5
June 13: 0.6
June 20: 0.5
June 27: 0.5

Analysis: *The WWE Experience,* in only its third week, flat-lined at 0.5 and has basically remained at that number ever since. Does this mean there just aren't that many wrestling fans watching television on Sunday mornings? *Experience,* despite the hype before the show's launch, is doing no better than *Confidential,* which was cancelled in April. With *Experience* failing to gain traction, one has to ask whether WWE has too many secondary and highlight programs.

SUNDAY NIGHT HEAT (Spike TV)

May 9: 0.8
May 16: 0.8
May 23: 0.8
May 30: 0.7
June 6: 0.8
June 13: 0.8
June 20: 0.7
June 27: 0.8

Analysis: Although its numbers are better than those of any of the other secondary programs, *Heat* is also feeling the ratings chill. As recently as March, *Heat* was scoring 1.0s and 1.1s, but it has now slipped into the 0.7 to 0.8 range. But, if one compares the quality of *Heat* today to the height of the Monday night war, there has been a significant decline. Consider a few of the wrestlers appearing on the June 13 edition: Rory McGregor, Eric Mastrocolo, and Jean Frederick Clement. Are these WWE superstars or 18th-century authors?

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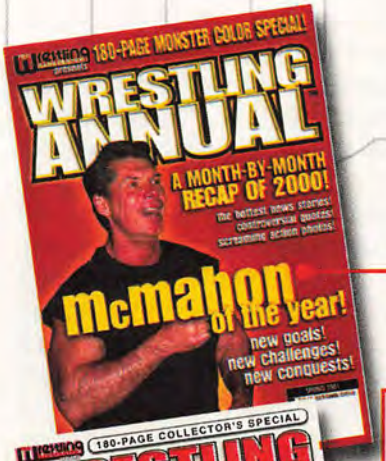

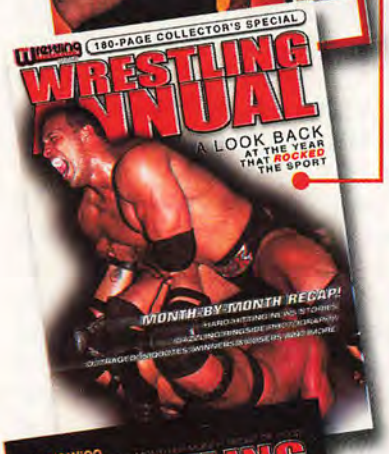

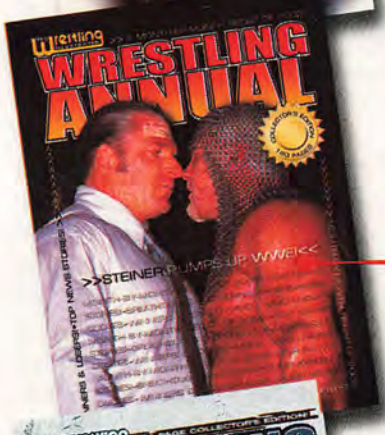

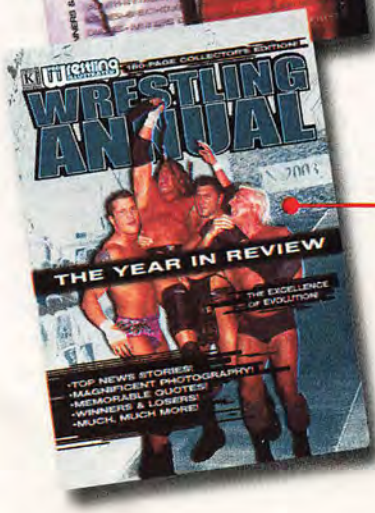

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the steel cage

By Liz Hunter

RIGHT WING TRAITOR? I disagree with just about everything John Bradshaw Layfield has said or done. I detest the racial slurs he has used against WWE Smackdown champion Eddie Guerrero. I abhor the brutality he exhibited in his title match against Guerrero at Judgment Day, in which he busted the champ open with a chair, causing him to lose a massive amount of blood and go into shock after the event. I hate the way he has bragged about his successful stock portfolio and his relationships with CNBC and Fox News.

And I'm not just writing about Layfield's latest "J.R. Ewing" persona, either. I couldn't stand the old Bradshaw, who wasted his career drinking beer, smoking fat cigars, and playing cards with his running buddy, Faarooq. He degraded women by trying to lure them into playing strip poker. He was a pitiful example to all the young male fans out there, the ones who would be misguided enough to view him as a role model.

We witnessed how Layfield ditched Faarooq when he had the opportunity to advance his own stagnant career. But, worst of all, Layfield has betrayed his own convictions by making a mockery of them.

Layfield has long been a loudmouth who has been too quick to espouse his political views. After the 9/11 attacks, Layfield claimed the U.S. should bomb Afghanistan "into a parking lot." He has wrapped himself in the American flag for the past several years, visiting troops in Afghanistan and Iraq, and embracing an intolerant love it-or-leave it attitude.

I detested those sentiments. Layfield's "shoot first, ask questions later" approach after 9/11 was exactly the wrong way to go. And just because he wants to wear the red, white, and blue, that doesn't make him any more patriotic than I am. Nevertheless, I could at least respect Layfield for being true to his convictions.

Now I'm wondering if those were his true convictions in the first place. By depicting Eddie Guerrero as a worthless immigrant, he is playing into the stereotype of conservatives as racists who want to close the borders. By endlessly bragging about visiting troops overseas as part of his heel character, he is cheapening their sacrifice. By talking up the Iraq War as the villainous JBL, he undermines that effort.

I'm not a conservative. In fact, I'm rather liberal in my views. But I feel sorry for all the conservative Americans and members of the Armed Forces who once respected Layfield, assuming he was speaking from the heart. He has displayed an astonishing willingness to make a mockery of what they believe ... just to get over as a main-event star.

Even before Bradshaw became JBL, he made it obvious that he was very patriotic and quite conservative. Liz Hunter is now wondering just how admirable his brand of patriotism is.

I WANT TO BE FRIENDS WITH EUGENE. I disliked the Eugene character when Nick Dinsmore first appeared on *Raw* as the slow-witted nephew of General Manager Eric Bischoff. Now that Eugene has become the unlikely breakout star of the Raw brand, even battling Triple-H in an exciting recent main event, I have to reconsider his character.

When I first saw Eugene, I thought he would portray another drooling simpleton on par with Bastion Booger and George "The Animal" Steele. But WWE has done an excellent job of depicting Eugene as talented, compassionate, and, yes, special. William Regal's willingness to defend his newfound friend, along with

Nick Dinsmore had a lot of people, Liz Hunter included, fearing that Eugene would be a disaster when he made his first appearance on *Raw*. Now she's happy to report WWE has done well by Eugene, even when he's in the ring with Triple-H.

Eugene's friendship with The Rock and Raw champion Chris Benoit, has made this work. But the most important dynamic has been the response of WWE fans, who have never laughed at Eugene, but laughed *with* him. No snob in the mainstream media would ever give wrestling fans credit for having that kind of maturity and understanding. To be honest, I didn't expect it, either.

Eugene proved all of us wrong. Thanks, Eugene.

TNA'S WORLD CLASS EFFORT. When *Impact* premiered on Fox Sports Net on June 4, TNA unveiled a few more innovations, including a six-sided ring and a judge to determine the winner of time-limit draws, but months earlier, it instituted the rule that championships can change hands via disqualification or countout. The latter innovation was perhaps the most overlooked, but in the long run, will be the most important.

Having titles determined by DQ or countout has been tried before. World Class Wrestling, when it seceded from the NWA in 1986, wanted to prove the worth of its self-proclaimed world champion by implementing that rule. World Class officials suggested that World Class champion Rick Rude was a more worthy champion that NWA World champion Ric Flair, AWA World champion Stan Hansen, and WWF World champion Hulk Hogan because he couldn't save his title by DQ or countout.

It's a nice sentiment, very sportsmanlike. But, in "World Class Pulls Out Of The NWA: What It Means To Wrestling," published in the July 1986 issue of PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED, we addressed the pitfalls of such a rule change:

The reason the NWA has never changed its disqualification rule is, according to [NWA President Bob] Geigel, the fear that the title would change hands like a hot potato. Certainly, there is the danger of this happening, especially with the belt around the waist of a confirmed rule-breaker like Rick Rude. Should Percy Pringle interfere, it would now cost his man not only the match, but his title. The NWA was also wary of the increased role the referee will now have in the outcome of a match. The style and temperament of the officials is now as important as that of the wrestlers. Some referees will not tolerate a minor indiscretion, while others turn their eyes from all but the most flagrant violations. Is this fair? Should a world title rest on the subjective eye of an official?

Those arguments are still relevant today. And, ironically, it is the NWA that is introducing the rule change. With titles changing on DQ and by countout, and in three-way and four-way matches and now the "King Of The Mountain," TNA is straying a bit too far from tradition. In my opinion, NWA title matches should be one-on-one, with the title changing hands only by pinfall or submission. That way, the NWA can ensure that its champions deserve the honor. □

strange list of the month

FIVE INNOVATIONS TO COINCIDE WITH THE SIX-SIDED RING

1. The one-sided Fox Sports Net deal
2. The two-faced Michael Shane
3. The 3 Live Kru
4. The four-way "Ultimate X" match
5. The five ways Vince Russo will get involved in the next NWA title match

win, lose, or draw

By Harry Burkett

WHAT KIND OF impact is *Impact* likely to have on TNA's future? To be blunt, the Fox Sports Net program has raised TNA's ever-closing window of opportunity by only a few inches. Let's face it: TNA is still in serious trouble. I know the critics have been prematurely calling for TNA's demise ever since its debut on pay-per-view in June 2002. But the truth is that TNA has been in serious trouble since the very beginning and, as of now, that hasn't changed much. The only difference is that TNA has bought some time—literally.

By purchasing air time on Fox Sports Net, TNA is violating one of the unwritten rules in pro wrestling—the principle that says promoters should never pay for television shows. The long-held tradition of promoters in the territorial days was to offer the shows to local TV stations for free. Then sales representatives at the stations would sell commercial spots to local sponsors, who were usually willing to support pro wrestling shows because they generally drew relatively high ratings. Long-time wrestling fans might remember reading the disclaimer at the end of many local wrestling shows, which concluded with something like, "This program has been offered to your local station in exchange for commercial consideration."

Although he is only a minority owner of TNA, Jeff Jarrett was instrumental in negotiating with Fox Sports Net to get *Impact* on the air. He knows all too well, however, that it was just one step toward turning TNA into a profitable company (he hopes).

Before and after TNA's PPV premiere, Jerry Jarrett—currently a minority co-owner—vowed he would not jump at the first broadcast or cable opportunity, and that he'd rather have no deal than a bad deal. That implied TNA would not pay for air time and would remain exclusive to PPV if necessary. TNA is now paying for its time on Fox Sports Net. In fact, TNA explored a similar deal with WGN—a Chicago-based station with national reach—in late-2003.

Why the change? The pay-per-views aren't attracting nearly as many buyers as the Jarretts had initially hoped. They had assumed cable operators, which have a financial stake in generating as many PPV buys as possible, would be more committed to advertising TNA and making wrestling fans aware of the product. That turned out not to be the case, and TNA has been struggling ever since. The Jarretts tried to remedy the problem with a syndicated show, *Xplosion,* but that gained only a few decent time slots in scattered markets throughout the United States.

If TNA is to survive, it needs more exposure. Cable executives no longer consider wrestling a hot commodity, despite the fact that *Raw* is consistently ranked among the top five cable programs in the U.S., and *Smackdown* is often the top-rated show on UPN. But, as is the case with cable operators, cable network executives have become bureaucrats in larger media conglomerates and are often unwilling to take risks, even though chances are good for profits in the long run. Considering the quality of the TNA product, I have no doubt that it would fare well head-to-head against WWE on Monday or Thursday nights if any major cable network made the investment. Fox Sports Net is a major network, but it is a network based more on the old syndication model, not cable channels such as Spike TV, USA, or TNT. The power really lies in the local cable operators, from the Fox Sports Net outlets in the South and West Coast to the Comcast Sports Net affiliates in the Philadelphia and Baltimore markets.

Although *Impact* was approved for a halfway decent time slot on Friday afternoons at 3:00, many snobbish program directors are burying the show after midnight. In the Baltimore market, for example, *Impact* was

originally scheduled for Saturday mornings at 4:00. Too late to stay up for (even for true night owls), and too early to wake up for, that has to be the darkest hour on the programming schedule. In the first four weeks of its existence, *Impact* was pre-empted twice, once for a one-hour racing show and again for a *replay* of an Orioles game. Thanks to the loyal support of wrestling fans, however, the Baltimore affiliate announced that TNA would air at midnight on Saturdays beginning in July. Slowly but surely, *Impact* is making similar strides throughout the country.

Yet, clearly, Fox Sports Net is not the ideal venue. Program directors will always be more than eager to pre-empt *Impact* for "legitimate" sports, although TNA might draw higher ratings. Unless *Impact*—through its emphasis on athleticism—can sway diehard sports fans, the Jarretts should continue searching for another outlet. The AWA, World Class Championship Wrestling, and the Global Wrestling Federation all withered on the vine on ESPN, while the WWF flourished on entertainment-oriented networks.

Abyss and all the other TNA stars could be treating fans to some of the greatest matches in the history of the sport every week, but it won't really matter in the long run if *Impact* doesn't get good ratings, maybe a better time slot, or a spot on a stronger network. And that's still really just the beginning.

While TNA's purchase of air time on Fox Sports Net is a last resort, and perhaps an indicator of the company's desperation, it has been done before. Vincent K. McMahon used investors' money to buy air time in key markets in the Midwest and West during the WWF's national expansion in the mid-1980s. Old-time promoters such as Verne Gagne scoffed at McMahon's seemingly ridiculous business sense. Why would McMahon opt to lose money in those markets? Unfortunately for those old-timers, McMahon had a larger goal in mind, which was to gain a foothold in those markets, even if he had to spend some money, to drive his rivals—including Gagne—out of business. That is TNA's strategy: to spend some money now in order to earn lots more money in the future. Many promotions have attempted that, and with poor results. The X Wrestling Federation paid for half-hour infomercials in markets before house shows came to town. As it turned out, those were utter failures, and most of the house shows never took place.

The cold, scary fact is that TNA has yet to turn a profit ... ever. The Jarretts were about to go out of business before Dixie Carter, who had been working for TNA in the public relations sphere, convinced her father, Bob Carter, to invest in the fledgling promotion. Mr. Carter's company, Panda Energy, now holds majority interest in TNA. According to most reports, Bob Carter is willing to be patient in order to make greater profits someday. With TNA losing tens of thousands of dollars every month, Carter must have the patience of Job. The Carters and the Jarretts realize the Fox Sports Net deal is just a steppingstone, either to a good time slot or to another prominent network. The only question is whether Carter's money and patience will hold out until Spike TV's rivals—whether it is Fox Broadcasting, USA, or BET, or something else—realize there is a gem of a wrestling organization just waiting to compete with WWE.

Impact has proven that TNA is capable of producing a unique and refreshing alternative to *Raw* and *Smackdown*. In fact, *Impact's* early shows have been superior to TNA pay-per-views in terms of production values and originality. The shame is that TNA can produce a show superior to WWE every week, but it doesn't mean anything unless it can gain comparable footing in the cable market. It takes money and momentum to turn investments into empires. Right now, Panda Energy and the Jarretts have a long shot ... but I think they'll make the most of the opportunity. □

the straight shooter

By Dan Murphy

READERS, IT'S TIME for me to come clean.

There are a few things I have to get off my chest. Things that have been eating me up inside for some time now. I have a few skeletons in my closet, and I'm just too tired to keep living this life of duplicity and deception. Please, hear my confession. I hope you have it in your heart to forgive me.

First of all, I am the father of Lita's baby. In case it's never revealed on TV, I'm telling all of you now.

I know you probably thought it was Kane or Matt Hardy, but it was me all along. What can I say—I'm a sucker for redheads. To be fair, Lita has been throwing herself at me for a few years now. I mean, what woman doesn't get all hot and bothered over wrestling columnists? She used to beg me to whisper NWA title lineages into her ear, to beguile her with vintage World Class Championship Wrestling storylines, and enchant her with my famed Dusty Rhodes impressions.

I awakened a sexual beast in that poor woman and succumbed to her charms. Now the poor WWE creative team has to cover the consequences of our tryst with a lame pregnancy storyline, and I know how much everyone hates pregnancy storylines. All this is my fault, and I am sorry.

Wait, there's more.

I was also "Diamond" Dallas Page's mysterious financial backer back in WCW nearly a decade ago.

You remember when DDP fell on those hard times. Well, I felt bad for the poor scamp, and I gave him a little loan from my trust fund to help him get back on his feet. Every week, Tony Schiavone and the WCW announcers wondered who the mysterious benefactor was. They never found out that it was me all along. I didn't want to embarrass Page, so we just pretended like it never happened. Eventually, everyone forgot about it, but it's been weighing on my conscience ever since. I mean, no one likes it when storylines are dropped with no explanation. That was my bad.

I hope you're not choking on your bile of indignation, because there's more.

Remember the 1993 King of the Ring PPV, at which Yokozuna beat Hulk Hogan for the World title when a ringside photographer launched a fireball into Hogan's face?

Oops.

But I think the folks at Kodak deserve some of the blame for that one, too. I mean, flashbulbs aren't supposed to explode, are they? You can't blame me for not 'fessing up to that little fiasco, can you? The worst part is I didn't even get a good picture out of it.

And before you ask, yes, I was behind GTV, too. That started innocently enough. I was backstage at a *Raw* card in Raleigh, North Carolina, when one of the cameramen experienced some gastrointestinal distress. I suspect it had something to do with the chili left out on the production buffet table, but that's not important. Gary—that was his name—had to make an emergency bathroom run, and he handed me the camera so no one would walk off with it. I didn't even know how to work the thing. How was I to know it was filming when Val Venis was having a racy chat with Terri Runnels nearby?

Well, that mistaken segment drew some hot numbers with the Nielsen folks, and management was thrilled. Gary got a big promotion. They even named the segment after him: Gary Television, or GTV for short. I never even got so much as a thank you for it.

Matt Hardy was so overcome with joy when he found out Lita was pregnant that he dropped to one knee and proposed to her live on national TV. Then Kane ruined the moment with a shocking announcement. Brace yourself, Matt, for this story has yet another wacky twist!

Remember when "Diamond" Dallas Page was so hard up that he had to lower himself to working for us for a day? You didn't believe the rumor that Kimberly was the mysterious benefactor who got him back on his feet, did you? It was actually The Muph!

The mysterious Humvee that kept ramming cars and wrestlers in WCW? It was a rental. If you went from driving a four-cylinder Ford Probe to a jacked up Humvee, you'd probably make some mistakes judging distance and stopping power, too. When WCW management found out the driver was just a wrestling writer with poor depth perception, those guys were pretty peeved.

At least WWE was good enough to cover for the time I ran down Steve Austin with a storyline about Rikishi standing up for his Samoan brethren. I was running late for the show and didn't want to miss anything, so I was going a little fast when I pulled into the parking garage. How was I supposed to know that Austin would be running through the place chasing after Triple-H? I mean, what are the odds? After I ran over "Stone-Cold," I panicked, turned around, and drove right back to the hotel. Boy, did I feel sheepish.

It feels good to let all of this out. You have no idea how hard it's been living with the knowledge that I was the reason for some of wrestling's most asinine, ridiculous, and (in some cases) unresolved storylines. I hear fans talking about how much they hate it when a promotion just ignores important plotlines and pretends nothing ever happened. And I feel a burning shame when they bring up incidents that I mistakenly caused.

It's not laziness on the poor creative team's behalf. It's not a lack of understanding of what the fans want, or a failure to plan ahead. It's all the fault of a bumbling *PWI* columnist who just has a knack for being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Think back to any wrestling storyline that went unfinished, and most likely, you can find a way to trace it back to me. Call it Murphy's Law.

Now that this is out in the open, please forgive me. I hope we can move on.

One more thing: I was the father of Stacy Keibler's baby, too. But I swear to God, I did not have sexual relations with that woman, Mae Young. □

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You're at the airport. You see your favorite wrestler relaxing in one of the terminals. You rush up to him or her as questions fill your excited mind. There are certain things you just *have* to know about this person. Well, these are the 12 questions you'd never think of asking

12 questions

A.J. STYLES

You're a worldly kind of guy. What is the worst experience you've ever had on an airplane?

Flying from Chicago to Los Angeles, I had to pee really, really bad, but the aisle seat was occupied by a crippled guy who couldn't get up and let me out. That was the worst.

If you were allowed to share only one lesson of advice with would-be wrestlers, what would it be?

Sell … please.

What's the weirdest thing a fan has ever done to you?

I got this letter from a fan, and it was a nice letter telling me how great I am and stuff. The fan called me hot. The fan wanted to get together for pizza. It ended with a smiley face. The letter was from a dude.

Besides you, what makes the X division so exciting?

Chris Sabin and his unique way of landing on his head.

If you weren't wrestling right now, what would you be doing?

I don't know. Probably something that has to do with video games, like a tester who makes five dollars an hour to play games all day.

What's your favorite video game and why?

An old arcade game called Track & Field. It's a button-smashing game. It's a very good old school game from the early-'80s.

What's the lamest video game?

Backstage Assault for WCW. It was *so* bad.

You have a choice between Ron Jeremy, Carmen Electra, and Jim Hellwig to live with on a deserted island for the rest of your life. Which would you choose and why?

Carmen Electra, because if I'm stranded on an island forever, that's cause for divorce, and I'll just have to be with Carmen Electra.

Hey, what are you wearing?

PJs with little sailboats on them.

Have you ever bought anything you've seen in an infomercial?

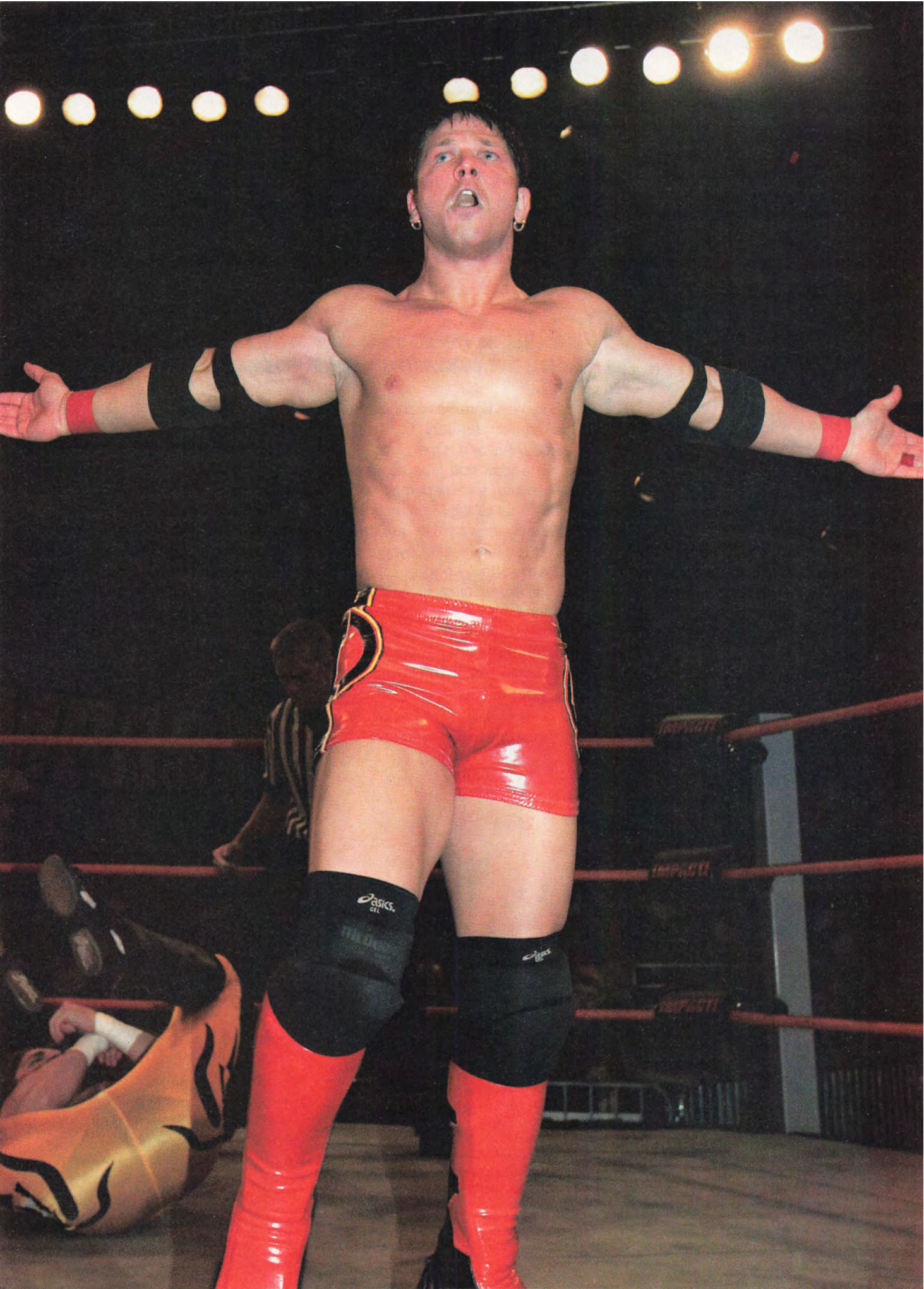
Yes, a little thing that you use to cut your face hair. I used it to cut my sideburns, but it didn't work. I used it maybe once.

What's the one wrestling move you've seen someone else do that made you say, *"Wow!"*

Petey Williams' flipping piledriver.

You have a hammer, midget, and a roulette wheel. What are your plans for the evening?

Hmmmmmm … perform a circus act. I'd put the midget on the wheel and spin it. Then I'd throw the hammer at the midget. The hammer wouldn't stick, I guess, unless it hit the midget in the right place. We'd make lots of money. □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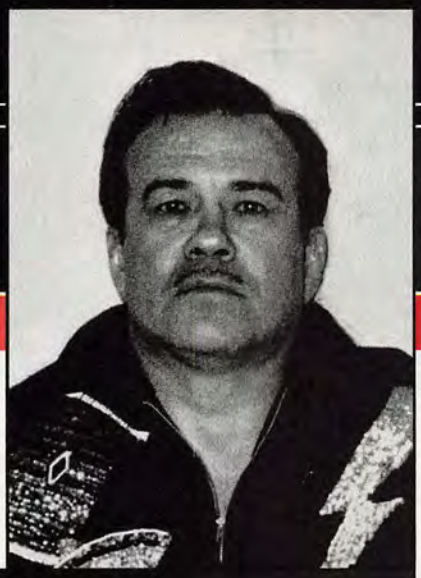


The Wrestling Observer

Hall of Fame

Gory Guerrero

In each issue, *PWI* will honor one member of the *Wrestling Observer* Hall of Fame, which we recognize as the sport's official Hall of Fame

IT'S A TESTAMENT to Gory Guerrero's influence that his name is perhaps better known to American fans today than it was during his wrestling prime. In addition to his own impressive list of wrestling achievements, Gory was also the patriarch of the Guerrero family, the father of reigning WWE Smackdown champion Eddie Guerrero.

Gory was born Salvador Guerrero Quesada on January 11, 1921, in Kearney, Arizona. One of nine children, he took odd jobs at a young age, working as a paperboy, a hotel bellboy, and selling Mexican bread.

When he was 14, his family moved to Guadalajara, where Gory discovered the world of Lucha Libre. Initially wanting to be a boxer, he soon became enamored with the acrobatic heroics of the Luchadores and trained under Raul Romero and Diablo Velasco. He made his pro debut on September 15, 1937, at the tender age of 16, losing to Raf El Rojo.

Gory was a natural wrestling talent with a strong affinity for submission wrestling. He quickly picked up on the fundamentals of amateur wrestling, which he incorporated into his pro arsenal. He is credited with inventing both the camel clutch (which he called *le de a caballo*) and the Gory special, a hanging backbreaker used today by such stars as his son Eddie, grandson Chavo Guerrero Jr., and "American Dragon" Bryan Danielson. Gory was one of the first Hispanic Americans to enter Lucha Libre when it developed in Mexico.

Also known as El Ave de las Tempestades ("Storm Bird") for his quick-moving, aggressive-yet-graceful style, he was recognized as Luchador of the Year by the Mexican sporting press in both 1946 and 1960. He and the legendary El Santo were considered Lucha Libre's great dream team, La Pareja Atomica ("The Atomic Pair"), beloved *technicos* battling the villainous *rudos* of Lucha.

Gory was a major draw both in Mexico and in Los Angeles, winning the Mexican national welterweight title and NWA Americas tag team title. Gory also had runs as NWA welterweight champion, NWA middleweight champ, NWA light heavyweight champ, and national middleweight champ.

Gory was also hugely popular in

Although Gory Guerrero was proud to call himself a Luchador, he wasn't all about high-flying and acrobatics. Far from it. In addition to being a strong submission wrestler, he was very proficient on the mat.

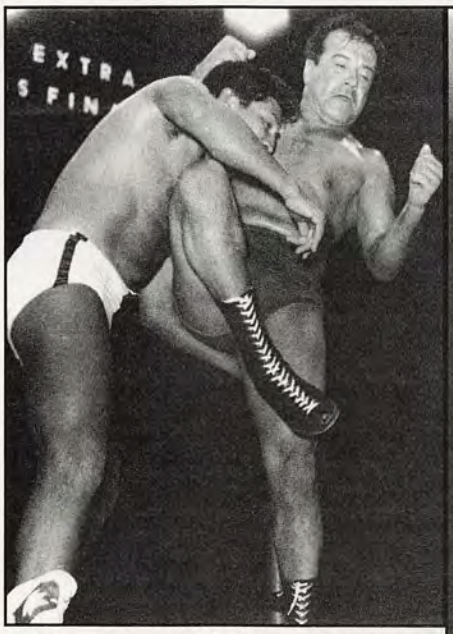
Texas and Oklahoma, where he defended the NWA Texas tag title with Cyclone Anaya, the Southwest junior heavyweight title, and the Oklahoma junior heavyweight title. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, he was arguably the most accomplished light heavyweight in North America.

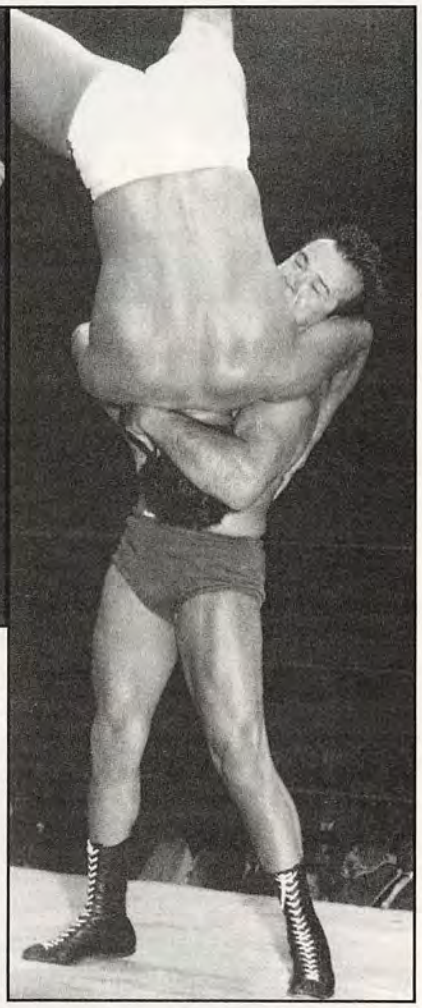
Gory's most notable feuds included battles with Cavernario Galindo and Bobby Bonales. The feud against Galindo was thought by some to be the bloodiest in wrestling history to that point, and it helped popularize blood bouts throughout Mexico. It took Bonales an amazing 1 hour 50 minutes to beat Gory for the NWA welterweight title in a match that is still considered a Lucha Libre classic.

The closest Gory ever came to winning a world heavyweight title was on November 16, 1954, when he faced NWA champion Lou Thesz at Arena Coliseo. Though Gory lost the bout, Thesz professed a deep respect for him and his skills. His last title run came in 1976, when he and son Chavo Sr. (Chavo Classic) teamed to beat Senior X and Karl Von Brauner for the NWA Americas tag title. The Guerreros dropped the belts to Crusher Verdu and a youngster by the name of Roddy Piper.

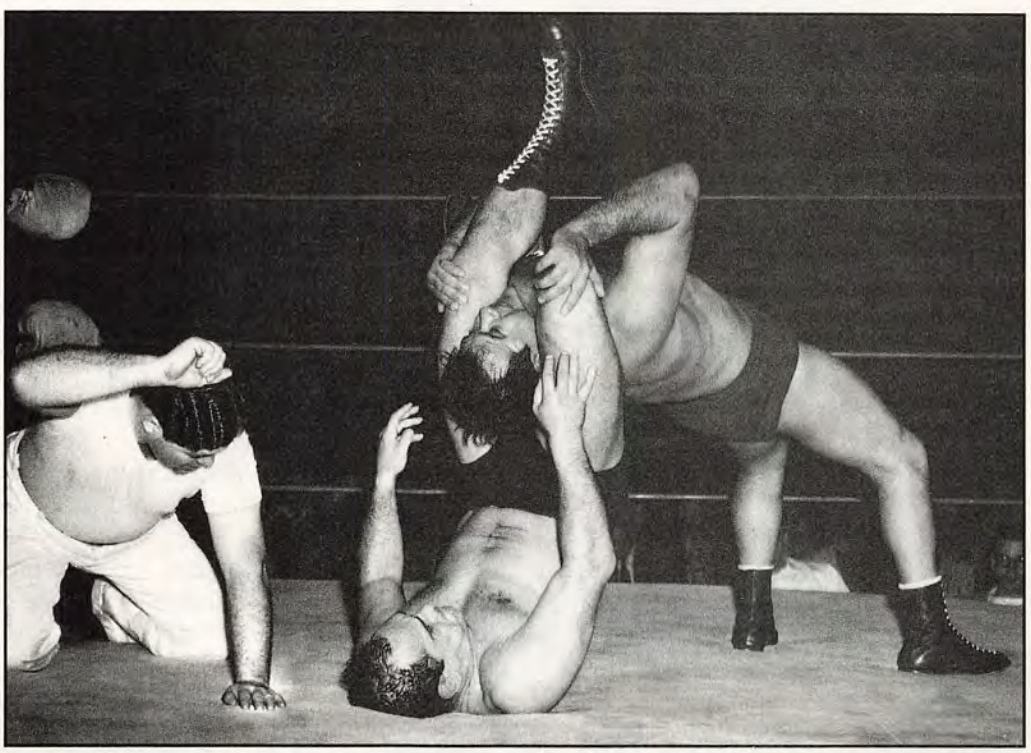
Gory's legacy extends beyond titles and the invention of two of the sport's most durable submission holds. He also trained up-and-coming wrestlers, including Pepe Mendieta and sons Mando, Chavo, Hector, and Eddie. In addition, he worked as a promoter in Texas and Mexico throughout the 1970s. He cut back on his wrestling but never truly retired until the early-1980s.

Gory died on April 18, 1990, in El Paso, Texas. He was a charter member of the *Wrestling Observer* Hall of Fame, inducted in 1996. He is remembered as one of the sport's most innovative and accomplished wrestlers and promoters. □





Gory had some terrific battles with another Lucha legend by the name of Ray Mendoza (above and right). He was so popular and so accomplished in both the United States and Mexico.



The Guerrero family patriarch could use a lot of unorthodox holds to pin an opponent's shoulders to the mat, including some that appeared that cause him some pain.

independent roundup

By Liz Hunter

THIS MONTH'S EDITION of "Independent Roundup" reads more like a police blotter. Florida bad boy **Michael Rapuano** (a.k.a. **Bobby Rogers**) was indicted by a federal grand jury in June on several counts, including defrauding a national communications company and several credit card companies. Rapuano is already in Broward County Jail serving a six-month sentence for probation violation and writing bad checks. Those charges are not related to the new federal charges. Also indicted by the feds were **Michael Stanco**—better known to Florida indy fans as **Maximum Capacity**—and **Sheila Lucas**.

The former Bobby Rogers should be ripping his hair out now over his legal battles. He's currently a guest at the Broward County Jail in Florida and could soon find himself in a federal lockup thanks to a bevy of charges.

Rapuano was also charged with access device fraud, conspiracy to commit access device fraud, and obstruction of justice. If found guilty, he could get up to 25 years in a federal prison and face $750,000 in fines. Stanco and Lucas were both charged with access device fraud and conspiracy to commit access device fraud. They could face up to 15 years in prison and $500,000 in fines for their involvement. Stanco and Lucas both pled not guilty, but Stanco said he would cooperate with prosecutors as they pursue their case against Rapuano.

In more police news, Michigan independent wrestler **Vic Vengeance** made national TV—but not in the usual manner an up-and-coming indy wrestler would. Vengeance, real name **Timothy William Berner**, was profiled on the June 12 episode of *America's Most Wanted*. State and federal warrants for first-degree murder were issued for Berner after he allegedly killed **Mark Anthony Sawyers**, a Sterling Heights, Michigan, police officer. The officer was shot in his patrol car on June 4, and a nearby bank surveillance camera recorded the incident and Berner's car fleeing the scene. Berner was last seen driving a red 1994 Chevy Camaro with Michigan license plate number YSR497. He is considered by police to be armed and dangerous, as he is believed to have both a pistol grip shotgun and Sawyers' police-issue handgun in his possession. A $25,000 reward is being offered for his apprehension. If you have any information regarding Timothy Berner, please contact *America's Most Wanted* through its Web site, www.americasmostwanted.com, or by calling 1-800-CRIME-TV.

Ring of Honor has split from its sister company, RF Video, and is now fully owned by **Cary Silkin**. The split occurred after former ROH majority owner **Rob Feinstein** attempted to reassume control of both companies. Months earlier, Feinstein had issued a statement announcing he was stepping down from both ROH and RF Video after he was implicated in an Internet sex sting conducted by a Philadelphia TV station. ROH is currently setting up its own office in suburban Philadelphia and will now produce and distribute its own merchandise—including the tapes and DVDs of shows. For more on this story, see "The Business Page" on page 40.

In more saddening news, Ohio independent wrestler **Chief Bootnocka** died on June 12 after wrestling on a show in Toledo, Ohio. The Chief—whose real name was **Juan Garcia**—was only a few weeks shy of his 34th

birthday ... Veteran IWA star **Victor the Bodyguard**—real name **Victor Manuel Rodriguez Garcia**—died of a heart attack in June after interfering in a match during a show in Puerto Rico. According to the Associated Press, he went into the dressing room, lit a cigarette, and collapsed on the ground. He was 38 and held the IWA hardcore title at the time of his death.

Pro Wrestling NOAH GHC tag team champs **Mitsuharu Misawa** and **Yoshinari Ogawa** made a rare American appearance on a Pro Wrestling IRON show recently. They successfully defended the belts against **Nigel McGuinness** and **Bart Blaxon** ... **Justice** emerged as the winner of this year's **Jeff Peterson** Memorial Cup, defeating **Roderick Strong** and **Chris Hero** in a three-way bout. The two-day, three-show event featured dozens of wrestlers from across North America. Peterson's friend and retired wrestler **Jet Jaguar** served as special guest referee for the final match ... Congratulations to recent Missouri Wrestling Hall of Fame inductees **Harley Race**, **Bob Orton Jr.**, **Ted DiBiase**, **Lumberjack Abe**, **Lumberjack Gabe**, **Ron Powers**, **Gary Jackson**, and **Tony Casta**.

QUICK TITLE CHANGES: Blue Water Championship Wrestling, Marysville, MI, June 19: **The Suicycos** beat **Sugar 'n' Spice**, **Tommy Titus** and **Johnny Dynamo**, and **Maximum Impact** to win the tag team title ... ***IWA, Hartwell, GA, June 19:*** **Billy Starr** defeated heavyweight champion **Rahn Jordan** to win the title ... ***New Age Wrestling Alliance, Dallas, TX, June 19:*** **Texas Trailer Trash** defeated **NC-17** to become the new NWA Texas tag team champions ... ***NWA Bluegrass, Salyersville, KY, June 19:*** **Billy Maverick** and **Vivacious Vinnie** beat tag champs **The Redneck Express** to win the title ... ***NWA New England, Sanford, ME, June 19:*** **The Elite** defeated tag team champions **Beau Douglas** and **Handsome Johnny** to win the title ... **Apocalypse** defeated heavyweight champion **Brian Buffet** to win the title ... ***National Wrestling League, Martinsburg, WV, June 19:*** **Samu** pinned heavyweight champion **Leslie Leatherman** in a steel chain match to win the title; after the match, Samu voluntarily vacated the title ... ***Ultimate Championship Wrestling, Bay City, MI, June 12:*** **The Barbarian** beat heavyweight champ **Justin Rhodes** to win the title ... **Sky Devian** beat cruiserweight champ **Jayson Yang** for the title ... **Mayhem** and **The Barbarian** beat **The New Rock 'n' Roll Express** and **Justin Rhodes**, with Mayhem becoming the new tag team champs ... ***Central Wrestling Alliance, Alton, KY, June 12:*** **Maddawg** pinned heavyweight champ **Terry Alan** to win the title ... **J.T. Money** and **Cash Money** beat tag champs **Chopper** and **Chase Daniels** to win the title ... ***Bad 2 The Bone Wrestling, Hartford, KY, June 12:*** **Vic the Bruiser** and **J.C. Bailey** beat tag team champs **Simon Sezz** and **Randy Royal** to win the title ... ***Washington State Wrestling, Chehalis, WA, June 12:*** **Billy Two Eagles** pinned heavyweight champion **Skag Rollins** in a strap match to win the title ... ***World of Hurt Wrestling, Hudson Falls, NY, June 11:*** **Steve Kruz** defeated **Bert Williams** to win the cruiserweight title ... **Shane Alden** won a three-way match against **Brodie Lee** and **Shana** to win the U.S. title ... **Warpath** defeated heavyweight champ **Danger** to win the title ... ***Bad 2 The Bone Wrestling, Hartford, KY, June 11:*** **J.C. Bailey** beat hardcore champ **Alister Fear** to win the title ... ***Pro Wrestling IRON, San Leandro, CA, June 11:*** **Mike Modest** and **Donovan Morgan** defeated **Joel** and **Jose Maximo** to become the first PWI tag team champions ... ***XCW, Denton, TX, June 11:*** **Hugh Rogue** defeated ironman champ **Scott Phoenix** to win the title ... **Jack Drastic** beat **Al Jackson** to win the TNT title. □

Why is Mike Modest so happy? He and Donovan Morgan are the first Pro Wrestling IRON tag team champions. They defeated Joel and Jose Maximo to win the belts on June 11.

the international report

By Mike Spillane

THE HONOR OF being called the best in this year's Best of the Super Junior Tournament went to the fourth incarnation of **Tiger Mask**, who triumphed over a strong field of competitors. With past winners like **Jushin Liger** and **Masa Kakihara**, and a host of other top-notch junior heavyweights ranging from **"American Dragon" Bryan Danielson** to **Ultimo Dragon** in the round robin, **Tiger Mask IV** cemented his staying power by coming out on top. The three previous Tiger Masks only wore the fabled furry hood for a few years each, but the current Tiger Mask, now in his 10th year under the mask, is here to stay. Tiger Mask IV's victory was particularly sweet considering he used the Tiger suplex, the finisher of the original Tiger Mask (**Satoru Sayama**), to pin **Koji Kanemoto** (the third Tiger Mask) in the finals at Korakuen Hall.

Tiger Mask IV outwrestled the man standing to his left, Jushin Liger, and a lot of the other top junior heavyweight talent in the Orient to win what was a scintillating 2004 Best of the Super Junior tournament. And he did in an appropriate way in the finals.

This year's Best of the Super Junior—hosted by New Japan Pro Wrestling—drew a lot more media attention than the 2004 Super J Cup, held by Osaka Pro earlier in the year. Even though Best of the Super Junior is an annual event on the *puroresu* calendar, and Super J Cups are few and far between, the name value of the wrestlers made all the difference this year. The presence of lesser-known athletes like **Garuda** (the Hindu word for eagle) and even eventual winner **Naomichi Marufuji** in the Super J didn't do much to spark public interest. The two tournament blocks of Best of the Super Junior were balanced out with younger stars and proven commodities, featuring a who's who of former IWGP junior heavyweight champions such as **El Samurai** and **Heat**. What resulted was the strongest version of Best of the Super Junior in years.

After exhaustive legal proceedings, the grandson of the original **El Santo**, called **El Plateado**, will be allowed to wrestle in a ring uniform similar to that of his famous grandfather. Santo's very famous son, **El Hijo del Santo**, who has competed worldwide over the last 20 years in a ring costume just like his father's, tried to prevent his nephew from adopting a similar outfit. **El Hijo del Santo** felt that another wrestler wearing a costume like his father's would confuse the public and ultimately hurt *his* career. Since El Santo is one of Mexico's greatest cultural icons of the last 50 years, El Hijo del Santo considers his role as the keeper of that legacy to be serious business.

Considering the tremendous success of both father and son in Lucha Libre, as well as in movies, comic books, and other outlets, it is easy to see why El Hijo del Santo is protective of the Santo image. However, El Plateado emerged victorious in court and, like both his uncle and grandfather, will be allowed to wrestle in the famed silver outfit and mask that is known the world over. El Plateado made his professional debut with IWRG in Naucalpan, Mexico, in September of last year.

Former All-Japan Women star **Momoe Naka-**

nishi has decided to call it a career at the fairly young age of 23. Just a few years ago, Nakanishi was beginning to cultivate a reputation as a breakout star, something the *joshi* scene badly needs now. With women's wrestling in a terrible slump overseas, Nakanishi's charisma and incredible in-ring talent could have provided a much-needed boost for the sagging industry. Unfortunately, Nakanishi, who turned pro when she was just 16 years old, has endured incredible punishment since her debut, and her body is not holding up well to the constant pounding. At a recent press conference, she confirmed that her deteriorating physical condition was the leading factor in her decision, and that she will round out her final year of wrestling. Momoe, no relation to New Japan's **Manabu Nakanishi**, has yet to set a date for her final match.

Is American wrestler/mixed martial artist Don Frye (shown battling Hiroyoshi Tenzan) about to become Japan's equivalent of The Rock? Not exactly, but he has landed a nice role in an upcoming *Godzilla* movie.

Nakanishi isn't the only female star making headlines in Japan. As if wrestling politicians like **Hiroshi Hase**, **Great Sasuke**, and **Atsushi Onita** weren't enough, the Jinto political party has sought out former women's star **Shinobu Kandori** as a candidate for the Japanese House of Councilors. The elections will have taken place by the time you read this.

American mixed martial artist/pro wrestler **Don Frye** will have a role in an upcoming *Godzilla* movie. Frye has spent most of his career in Japan, and has been a top star for New Japan in the past. The *Godzilla* franchise is immensely popular in Japan, where the fictional creature originated. *Puroresu* stars have been making movie appearances much like their American counterparts, but rarely in high-profile features like **The Rock**. Appearing in a *Godzilla* film will only add greater star power to Frye, which is something many of the wrestlers on the NJPW roster sorely lack right now.

One of New Japan's key players is celebrity fighter **Bob Sapp**, who briefly held the IWGP heavyweight title earlier this year. Sapp seems to spend much more time making public appearances and doing interviews about his upcoming projects than he does training for fights, and his imbalanced schedule finally caught up with him. Sapp was destroyed in a recent fight with **Kazayuki Fujita**, who clearly came well-prepared for the much bigger Sapp. While on the homefront, Sapp made some news when it was announced he had been cast in a villainous role in the upcoming movie *Elektra* with **Jennifer Garner**, but he has all but vanished from the Japanese scene, prompting some magazines and periodicals to speculate that he has gone into hiding after his crushing defeat.

Ian Rotten, who is probably best known as King of the Death Matches, has captured the top title in Germany, the Westside Xtreme Wrestling heavyweight championship. While Rotten is famed for his hardcore tendencies, he was trained years ago in the classic British style of grappling. The wXw championship, which has been held by ring technicians such as **Chris Hero** and **Double C** in the last year, is defended regularly in both Europe and the United States. Rotten defeated Double C for the title in June and has already made plans to defend it in his home promotion, IWA Mid-South. The German promotion's other championship, its cruiserweight title, is also held by an American, independent veteran **Mike Quackenbush**, who has has been defending it in the United States for months.

Lastly, an update from the "Where Are They Now?" department. Former **Three Minute Warning** and **Island Boys** member **Jamal** hasn't been seen much on the American scene since leaving WWE about a year ago (save for a brief stint in TNA as **Ekmo Fatu**). He's been staying busy touring with All-Japan Pro Wrestling as one of the company's top foreign stars and recently earned a shot at the Triple Crown. Reigning Triple Crown champion **Toshiaki Kawada** defeated the much larger Jamal in Nagoya to retain the titles. Jamal is part of an All-Japan stable that also includes **Taka Michinoku** and **Justin Credible**. □

arena reports

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E-mail results to **PWIQueen@aol.com.**

Spotlight Card of the Month

MILWAUKEE, WI—*WWE Velocity/Smackdown* tapings at the Bradley Center: **Orlando Jordan** & **Funaki** defeated **Brad Cooper** & **Jon Heidenreich** ... **Nunzio** & **Johnny Stamboli** beat **Billy Kidman** & **Paul London** ... **Mark Jindrak** defeated **Shannon Moore** ... **Billy Gunn** pinned **Sakoda** ... **Buh Buh Ray** & **D-Von Dudley** beat **Rey Misterio Jr.** & **Rob Van Dam** ... **Booker T** pinned **Scotty Too Hotty** ... **Spike Dudley** & **Torrie Wilson** beat **Jamie Noble** & **Dawn Marie** ... Cruiserweight champion **Chavo Guerrero Sr.** defeated **Akio** ... U.S. champion **John Cena** pinned **Rene Dupree** in a lumberjack match.
(05-25-04)

—"Spotlight" photos by Gary Dineen

UNITED STATES

ALABAMA

HEADLAND—South Alabama Wrestling Alliance at the Middle School: **Street Bandit** defeated **Twisted** ... **Inferno** beat **Larry Brock** by disqualification ... **Lightnin' Jack**, **Ron McCoy**, & **Miss Fire** beat **Kid Kaos**, **Caution**, & **The Medic** ... **Suicyde** defeated **Mongrel** by disqualification ... **Raging Beast** wrestled to a double-disqualification with **Dark Rage** ... **Exotic Storm** beat **Buddy Condrey** ... **Lord Humongous** wrestled to a double-countout with **Big Country** ... **The Texas Rough Riders** defeated **Larry Brock** & **The Assassin** ... **Scream** beat **Wild Stallion** and **Suicyde** in a three-way TLC match to win the heavyweight title.
(05-15-04)

—Matthew Bowman

ARIZONA

TEMPE—IZW at the Sets: **Adrenalyn** defeated **Kharma** ... **Lawrence Tyler** defeated **The Navajo Warrior** and **Hollywood Yates** in a triple threat match ... **Hawaiian Lion** pinned **Jack Durango** ... Tag team champions **Jack Bull Style** beat **Tommy Drake** & **G.Q. Gallo** ... **Derick Neikirk** wrestled **Mike Knox** to a no-contest.
(06-08-04)

—Dennis Wilcox

CALIFORNIA

SAN LEANDRO—Pro Wrestling IRON at the High School: **Super Otaku** beat **El Flaco Loco** ... **Apollo Kahn** defeated **Frank Murdoch** by disqualification ... **Sumie Sakai** beat **Sara Delray** ... **Tony Jones** & **Jason Brisbane** beat **Ryan Drago** & **Lars Dauger** ... **Super Diablo** & **Tony Kozina** defeated **Kriptonite** & **Seymore Snott** ... **Vinny Massaro** & **Big Ugly** beat **The IRON Saints** ... **Mike Modest** & **Donovan Morgan** defeated **Joel** & **Jose Maximo** to become the first tag team champions ... International champ **Bison Smith** beat **B.J. Whitmer** ... Pro Wrestling NOAH GHC tag team champions **Mitsuharu Misawa** & **Yoshinari Ogawa** defeated **Nigel McGuinness** & **Bart Blaxon**.
(06-11-04)

—Mike Veloza

HAYWARD—All Pro Wrestling at the APW Garage: **J.T. Hyatt** & **Jimmy Ripp** defeated **Lance Chandler** & **Grand Kahuna** ... **Dana Lee** & **Orlando Mathias** defeated **Chris Colioni** & **Vennis DeMarco** ... **Cheerleader Melissa** beat **Tiffany** ... **Robert Thompson** wrestled **The Grand Kahuna** to a double-disqualification ... **Nathan Rulez** beat **James Watkins** ... Internet champ **J.J. Perez** defeated **Jardi Frantz**.
(06-05-04)

—Brandon Shearer

SANTA ANA—Pro Wrestling Guerrilla at the Elks Lodge: **Disco Machine**, **The Human Tornado**, & **SuBadd** beat **Topgun Talwar**, **Charles Mercury**, & **Chris Bosh** ... **Puma** beat **Tony Kozina** ... **Ricky Reyes** beat **Bobby Quance** ... **Frankie Kazarian** beat **HardKore Kidd** ... Tag team champs **Super Dragon** & **Excalibur** beat **Josh Prohibition** & **M-Dogg 20** ... **B-Boy** beat **Scorpio Sky** ... **X-Foundation** beat **Shane** & **Shannon Ballard** in a loser-leaves-PWG match ... **Babi Slymm** beat **Adam Pearce**.
(05-22-04)

—Jimmy Korte

PALM SPRINGS—WWE at the Convention Center: **Torrie Wilson** beat **Dawn Marie** in a tiny teddy contest ... Smackdown tag team champions **Charlie Haas** & **Rico** beat **Billy Gunn** & **Hardcore Holly** ... **Mordecai** pinned **Orlando Jordan** ... **Mark Jindrak** pinned **Funaki** ... **Billy Kidman** & **Paul London** defeated **The Basham Brothers** and **Johnny Stamboli** & **Nunzio** in a three-way elimination match ... **The Undertaker** pinned **Booker T** ... U.S. champion **John Cena** defeated **Rene Dupree** ... Cruiserweight champion **Chavo Guerrero Jr.** beat **Spike Dudley** and **Jamie Noble** in a three-way match ... **Rey Misterio Jr.** & **Rob Van Dam** defeated **Buh Buh Ray** & **D-Von Dudley**.
(05-17-04)

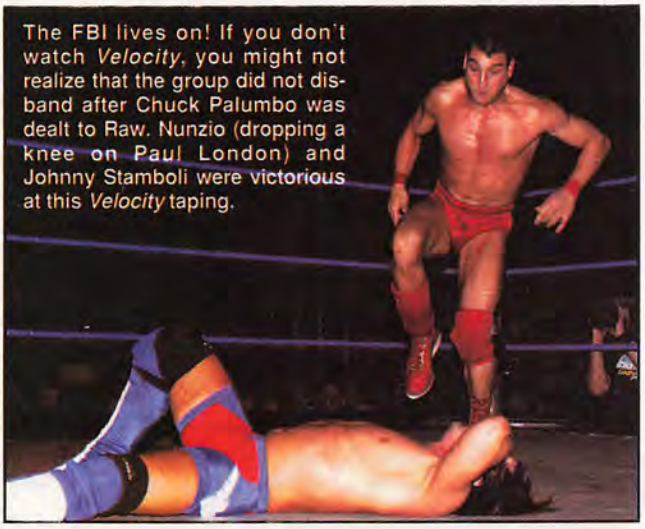
—Dutch Krewda

LOS ANGELES—WWE Judgment Day pay-per-view at the Staples Center: **Rey Misterio Jr.** & **Rob Van Dam** beat **Buh Buh Ray** & **D-Von Dudley** ... **Torrie Wilson** pinned **Dawn Marie** ... **Mordecai** pinned **Scotty Too Hotty** ... Smackdown tag team champions **Charlie Haas** & **Rico** defeated **Billy Gunn** & **Hardcore Holly** ... **Chavo Guerrero Jr.** pinned cruiserweight champion **Jacquelyn** to regain the title ... U.S. champion **John Cena** pinned **Rene Dupree** ... **The Undertaker** pinned **Booker T** ... **John Bradshaw Layfield** defeated Smackdown champion **Eddie Guerrero** by disqualification.
(05-16-04)

—Grant Curran

FLORIDA

ST. PETERSBURG—NWA Florida's "Peterson Cup 2004" at the Armory (day two): ***Afternoon show, second-round Matches:*** **Teddy Hart** defeated **Mikey Tenderfoot** ... **Justice** beat **Petey Williams** ... **Roderick Strong** beat **Alex Shelley** ... **Chris Hero** received a bye due to **Homicide's** injury ... ***In non-tournament matches:*** **April Hunter** beat **Jenni Taylor** and **Krissy Vaine** in a three-way match ... **Luther Jackson** beats **O.G. Scarface** ... **Naphtali** won a last-man-standing match ... PNW heavyweight champion **Cuban Assassin** defeated **Jeremy Lopez** ... **John Brooks**, **Chi Chi Cruz**, & **Azrieal** defeated **Puma**, **Matt Striker**, & **Sedrick Strong** ... **Jeff Bradley** & **Jimmy Jacobs** beat **The**



The FBI lives on! If you don't watch *Velocity*, you might not realize that the group did not disband after Chuck Palumbo was dealt to Raw. Nunzio (dropping a knee on Paul London) and Johnny Stamboli were victorious at this *Velocity* taping.

Bug & **Z-Barr** ... ***Evening show, tournament final:*** **Justice** won a three-way match against **Roderick Strong** and **Chris Hero** ... ***In non-tournament matches:*** **Mikey Tenderfoot** & **Black Tiger** beat **Alex Shelley** & **Petey Williams** ... **Bruce Steele** beat **Slyk Wagner Brown** ... **Zach Gowen** defeated **Rod Steel** ... **Scoot Andrews** beat **Colt Cabana** ... NWA Southern champion **Mike Sullivan** beat **Danny Doring** ... NWA junior heavyweight champion **Jerrelle Clark** defeated **Azrieal** ... **Lex Lovett** & **Steve Madison** defeated **The Shane Twins** ... **Frankie Capone** & **Marcus Dillon** beat **Dr. Heresy** & **Andre Lyons**.
(06-05-04)

—Shannon Rose

BRANDON—NWA Florida's "Peterson Cup 2004" at All Stars (day one): ***In bracket A matches of the tournament:*** **Roderick Strong** beat **Sederick Strong** ... **Alex Shelley** beat **Jimmy Jacobs** ... **Chris Hero** beat **Matt Striker** ... **Homicide** beat **Black Tiger** ... ***In bracket B matches:*** ... **Teddy Hart** beat **Azrieal** ... **Mikey Tenderfoot** beat **Puma** ... **Petey Williams** beat **Naphtali** ... **Justice** beat **Jack Evans** ... ***In non-tournament matches:*** **Danny Doring** beat **Z-Barr** and **Slyk Wagner Brown** ... **Lex Lovett** beat **Colt Cabana** ... **Zach Gowen**, **Chi-Chi Cruz**, & **Jerrelle Clark** defeated **The Bug**, **Erick Stevens**, & **O.G. Scarface** ... **The Shane Twins** defeated **Steve Madison** & **Mike Sullivan**.
(06-04-04)

—Shannon Rose

GEORGIA

CORNELIA—NWA Wildside at the NWA Arena: **Urban Assault Squad** beat **Brett Basics** & **Silo Storm** ... **John McChessney** & **Brandon P** beat **Seth Delay** & **Fast Eddie** ... A three-way match between **Caprice Coleman**, **Jeremy V**, and **Ray Gordy** went to a 15-minute draw ... **Sweet Dreams** beat **Kevin Matthews** ... **Jay Fury** & **Nick Halen** beat **Zero X** & **Jimmy Hustler** ... **Jacey North** beat **Jeff Lewis** in a strap match ... **Gabriel** & **Altar Boy Luke** beat **Texas Death Club** by disqualification.
(06-19-04)

—Larry Goodman

HARTWELL—IWA at the Middle School: Internet champion **Lance Christopher** wrestled to a no-contest with **Big Country** ... **James Boulevard** & **Phillip Pain** defeated **Don Matthews** & **The Tower** ... **Buford T** & **Tow Truck** beat **Casey J** & **Dale Dwindle** ... **Billy Starr** beat **Logan Kincayde** ... U.S. champion **Executioner** defeated **Tommy Sawyer** ... **Billy Starr** defeated heavyweight champion **Rahn Jordan** to win the title.
(06-19-04)

—Laura Carr

INDIANA

COLUMBUS—Hoosier Pro Wrestling at the National Guard Armory: **Tiny Tim** defeated **Mike Winters** ... Tag champs **T.J. Powers** & **Austin James** beat **Devon Fury** & **P.T. Hustla** ... **Cooter Clampett** defeated **Willie Loosagin** ... Women's champ **Syren** beat **Camoron Star** ... **Dave Dynasty** beat heavyweight champ **Jesse Houston** to win the title ... **Doug Gilbert** beat **Ox Harley** by countout.
(06-05-04)

—Joe Hughes

KANSAS

OVERBROOK—NWA Kansas at the Boys' & Girls' Club: **Ryan Knox** beat **Krow** ... **Tommy Snow** beat **J.C. Thunder** by disqualification ... **Tommy Snow** & **Krow** beat **J.C. Thunder** & **Ryan Knox** ... NWA Midwest tag champs **Mason Hunter** & **Mark Sterling** defeated **Michael Strider** & **Wade Chism** ... NWA Kansas champion **Griz** defeated **Doink the Clown** by disqualification ... **Brian Ash** wrestled NWA Central States champion **Derek Stone** to a double-countout.
(05-22-04)

—Steve Farrell

KENTUCKY

SALYERSVILLE—NWA Bluegrass at the Lloyd M. Hall Community Center: **Rob Casey** defeated **Super Destroyer** ... **Eric Darkstorm** pinned **Tony Gibbons** ... **Jake Layton** beat **D.S. Knight** ... **The New Assassins** wrestled **Halo** & **Death** to a draw ... **Devine Justice** beat **The Orient Express** ... **Chance Prophet** pinned **J.T. Money** ... **Billy Maverick** & **Vivacious Vinnie** beat **The Redneck Express** to become the new tag champs.
(06-19-04)

—Frank Miller

Mark Jindrak has Shannon Moore caught in quite the painful predicament. Theodore Long has brought out the narcissist in Jindrak of late.

ALTON—Central Wrestling Alliance at the Ruritan Club: **Cash Money** defeated **Chase Daniels** by countout ... Heavyweight champ **Terry Alan** pinned **Mongoose** ... **Cherry** beat **Terry Valiant** in an arm-wrestling match ... **Maddawg** beat heavyweight champ **Terry Alan** to win the title ... **J.T. Money** & **Cash Money** beat **Chopper** & **Chase Daniels** to become the new tag team champions ... **Cash Money** won a blindfold battle royal.
(06-12-04)

—Frank Miller

HARTFORD—Bad 2 the Bone Wrestling at the Ohio County Fair: **Simon Sezz** won a battle royal ... **Menace** defeated **Shawn Schultz** ... **Billy Black** defeated **Billy Maverick** by reverse decision ... **J.C. Bailey** defeated **Alister Fear** to win the hardcore title ... Heavyweight champion **Vic the Bruiser** beat **Simon Sezz**.
(06-11-04)

—Joe Bailey

MASSACHUSETTS

SOMERVILLE—New England Championship Wrestling at the Good Time Emporium: **The Slade Brothers** beat **Paul Lombardi** & **Doug Sommers** ... **Rocco Abruzzi** beat **Johnny Idol** ... **Sumie Sakai** & **Tanya Lee** beat **Mercedes Martinez** & **Sarah Sullivan** ... **Pride** wrestled **Adrenaline** to a no-contest ... Tag team champions **Sabotage** beat **Brandon Locke** & **Pat Masters** ... **Frankie Arion** beat **Antonio Thomas** ... Heavyweight champion **Michael Sain** beat **Alex Arion**.
(06-17-04)

—Brad Nielsen

WEBSTER—PWF Northeast at the Elks Lodge: **Gino Martino** & **Ali Muhammed** defeated **Jason Static** & **Nat Peterson** ... **Chris Venom** pinned **Danny Demanto** ... Junior heavyweight champ **Irwin Quincy** won a triangle match against **Damian Dragon** and **Nick Logan** ... **Triplelicious** defeated **Evan Siks** in a strap match ... **Jason Static** wrestled **Nice Peterson** to a no-contest ... **The Logan Brothers** beat **T.J. Richter** & **Mike Paiva** ... **Billy Black** won a four-way match against **Ebony Blade**, **Jason Blade**, and **Jose Perez** to win the vacant heavyweight title.
(06-11-04)

—Bryan Jackson

BOSTON—WWE at the FleetCenter: **Rhyno** pinned **Test** ... Raw tag team champions **Rob Conway** & **Sylvan Grenier** beat **The Hurricane** & **Matt Hardy** ... Intercontinental champion **Randy Orton** pinned **Shelton Benjamin** ... **Val Venis** & **Eugene** defeated **Garrison Cade** & **Jonathan Coachman** ... **Edge** pinned **Ric Flair** ... **Chris Jericho** beat **Tyson Tomko** in a no-holds-barred match ... **Lita** & **Victoria** beat **Molly Holly** & **Gail Kim** ... Raw champion **Chris Benoit** defeated **Triple-H** and **Kane** in a three-way match.
(06-05-04)

—Liz Hunter

LOWELL—Chaotic Wrestling at the Polish American Veterans Club: **The Logan Brothers** beat **The Lost Souls** ... **Tim McNeany** defeated **Chase Del Monte** ... **Pretty Psycho** defeated **Clinically Inclined** in an elimination table match ... **Kenn Phoenix** beat **Mike Hollow** ... **Adam Booker** beat **The Mighty Mini** ... Heavyweight champ **Arch Kincaid** beat **Maverick Wild**.
(05-14-04)

—Richard J. Palladino

MICHIGAN

COLDWATER—Midwest Wrestling Alliance at the Michigan Sports Camp: **The Big Andrewski** pinned **Mental Insanity** ... **Johnny Dollar** & **Noah Lott** defeated tag champs **MiZark Butler** & **BAM** for the title ... **Chris Coin** beat **Stanford Thorn** ... **Sean Lewis** defeated **Johnny Dollar** and **Unr8ted** in a triple threat match ... **The Angry Albino Jamaican** beat **C.J. Otis** ... Grand champion **Jack Thriller** defeated **C4**.
(06-06-04)

—Sid Salem

MISSOURI

ST. LOUIS—WWE at the Savvis Center: **Billy Kidman** & **Paul London** beat **Nunzio** & **Johnny Stamboli** ... Smackdown tag team champions

Charlie Haas & **Rico** beat **The Basham Brothers** ... **Rey Misterio Jr.** defeated **Mark Jindrak** ... **Spike Dudley** pinned **Chavo Guerrero Jr.** ... **The Undertaker** defeated **Buh Buh Ray** & **D-Von Dudley** in a handicap match ... **Rob Van Dam** pinned **Rene Dupree** ... U.S. champion **John Cena** beat **Booker T** ... Smackdown champ **Eddie Guerrero** pinned **John Bradshaw Layfield**.
(06-13-04)

—Thad Gorman

NEW JERSEY

TRENTON—Jersey All Pro Wrestling at the Chambersburg Little League Fundraiser: **Steve Corino** beat **Slyk Wagner Brown** ... **Chino Martinez** defeated **Kevin Matthews** ... Tag team champions **The Solution** beat **The Dirty Rotten Scoundrels** ... **April Hunter** defeated **Ariel** ... **Ricky Landell** beat **Alex Law** ... **Danny Doring** beat **Pinkie Sanchez** ... **Rockin' Rebel** & **Skinhead Ivan** beat **H20** ... **Low-Ki** & **Trent Acid** defeated **Teddy Hart** & **Sonjay Dutt**.
(06-12-04)

—Kenny Kingston

Billy Gunn works over the left arm of Sakoda en route to a singles victory. Gunn is focused on the team he has formed with Hardcore Holly for the most part now.

WEST PATERSON—Independent Pro Wrestling at the Camp IWF Pro Wrestling Training Center: **Aaron Stride** defeated **Dan McGuire** ... **Shawn Donavan** beat **Chris Steeler** ... **Vik Voorhees** & **Tony Torres** beat **Jay Blaze** & **Tenyo** ... Junior heavyweight champion **Sean Royal** beat **Travis Blake**.
(06-06-04)

—Dorothy Podsvirow

NEW YORK

SCHENECTADY—World of Hurt Wrestling at All American Health & Fitness: **Spiderman** defeated **Axel Phoenix** ... **Jay Jackson** defeated **Gryphon** ... **Bert Williams** beat **Justin Kidd** ... **Nick Neighborhood** & **Chuck Deep** beat **Shane Alden** & **Timmy Tasteless**, **Damon Vitale** & **Charisma**, and **Jimmy** & **Colin Olsen** in a four-corners elimination match ... **Kayla Sparxx** & **Synndy** defeated **Barbie**, **Miss DeVille**, & **Kenny Casanova** in a handicap match ... **Ricky Dominguez** beat **Ty Knox** ... **Scott Cardinal** beat **Hail Collins** ... **Texas Outlaw** defeated **Brodie Lee** and **Kenny Casanova**.
(06-18-04)

—Kat Lange

ROCHESTER—NWA Upstate at the German House: **Freddie Midnight** won a six-way free-for-all match against **Colin Olsen**, **Dicky Sanchez**, **Bobby Shields**, **Psy-Kita**, and **Steve Kruz** ... TV champion **Brodie Lee** beat **Cloudy** ... **The Natural Born Blonds** defeated **Evan McCloud** & **Big Cat** ... Tag team champions **The Ring Crew Express** beat **The Osawa Syndicate** ... NWA Illinois heavyweight champion **Colt Cabana** beat **Chip Stetson** ... **The Outcast Killaz** defeated **The Amazing Technicolor Dreamboats** ... **H.C. Loc** beat heavyweight champion **Charisma** by submission to win the title.
(06-06-04)

—Todd Brantley

NORTH CAROLINA

HIGH POINT—New Empire Wrestling at the Boys & Girls Club: **Scotty Mathews** beat **Abel Adams** by disqualification ... **Southside Playas** beat **Damage Inc.** in a streetfight ... Piedmont champion **Ravishing Ritchie** defeated **Rave** ... **Wayne Insane** pinned **Tony Lane** ... Tag champs **The Unholy Empire** beat **The Phoenix Brothers** in a ladder match ... **Dr. Feelgood** beat heavyweight champ **Bounty Hunter** in a non-title match.
(06-19-04)

—Michael Caruso

MOUNT AIRY—SWA at the National Guard Armory: **Corey Edsel** pinned **Xsiris** ... **L.A. Cash** & **J-Money** beat **Marvelous Mike** & **American Shadow** ... **Mikael Yamaha** pinned **American Steel Ninja** ... **GeeStar** pinned **Amber O'Neal** ... Southern States champion **Daddy Cole** won a triangle match against **Scottie Gash** and **Ric Converse** ... Tag team champions **Will Smooth** & **Jake Jones** defeated **Jesse Ortega** & **Mitch Norris** ... Heavyweight champion **Gary Stevens** wrestled **Shane West** to a draw.
(05-29-04)

—Grant Sawyer

OHIO

COLUMBUS—WWE Bad Blood pay-per-view at the Nationwide Arena: **Chris Benoit** & **Edge** defeated Raw tag team champions **Rob Conway** & **Sylvan Grenier** by disqualification when **Kane** interfered ... **Chris Jericho** pinned **Tyson Tomko** ... Intercontinental champion **Randy Orton** pinned **Shelton Benjamin** ... **Trish Stratus** defeated women's champion **Victoria**, **Gail Kim**, and **Lita** in a four-way match to win the title when she pinned Lita ... **Eugene** pinned **Jonathan Coachman** ... Raw champion **Chris Benoit** pinned **Kane** ... **Triple-H** pinned **Shawn Michaels** in a "Hell In A Cell" match.
(06-13-04)

—Will Welsh

CLEVELAND—Cleveland All Pro Wrestling at Turner's Hall: **Ironman** beat **Beatnick Page** ... **P.C. Lover** beat **The Bouncer** ... **Tyson Bishop** beat **Devin Devine** ... Junior heavyweight champ **Jason Turner** defeated **Justin Idol** and **Dios Salvador** in a three-way dance ... **J.T. Lightning** defeated **Jason Bane** by disqualification ... Tag champs **Adam Cage** & **8 Pac** beat **Da Munchies** ... **Chris Hamrick** defeated **John McChesney** ... Heavyweight champ **Raymond Rowe** beat **The Fever**.
(06-12-04)

—Ted Stevens

BATAVIA—Heartland Wrestling Association at the Red Barn Flea Market: **El Temor** defeated **Medic 8** in a mask vs. mask match ... **Simply Spectacular** & **Hillbilly Jed** beat **Michael Todd Stratton** & **Ala Hussein** ... **Jenelle Sinclair** & **Kara Kildare** beat **A.J. Sparx** & **Hellena Heavenly** ... **Chad Collyer** wrestled **Deuce** to a 15-minute time-limit draw ... **Crazy J** & **Lotus** beat **Benjamin Kimera** & **Shawn Osborne** in a streetfight ... **T.J. Dalton** won a triple threat match against **Matt Stryker** and **Cody Hawk** ... **Quinten Lee** defeated **Tack** by disqualification ... Heavyweight champ **Rory Fox** defeated **Matt Dillinger**.
(06-05-04)

—Dave Warrick

MIDDLETOWN—Buckeye Pro Wrestling at C.C.'s Showcase: **Nigel McGuinness** wrestled **Cody Hawk** to a double-countout ... **Ooga Booga** & **Jimmy Turner** beat **Ala Hussein** & **B.J. Whitmer** ... A three-way match between **Chad Collyer**, **Matt Stryker**, and **Nate Webb** ended in a no-contest ... **Lotus** & **Crazy J** defeated **Simply Fabulous** to become the new tag team champions ... **Dean Jablonski** pinned **Rowdy Ron** ... Heavyweight champion **Shark Boy** pinned **Chris Kanyon**.
(06-04-04)

—Jeff Levine

OKLAHOMA

TULSA—Tornado Professional Wrestling at the Owen Park Recreational Center: Hardcore champion **Shadow of Death** beat **Mitch Carter** ... **Romero Contreras** beat **Beau Dalton** and **Jon Davis** in a triple threat match ... **Brian Lakewood** beat **D-Day** ... **Poo Bear** beat **Sudden Impact** ... **Sonny C** beat Oklahoma champion **Justin Lee** in a table match.
(06-18-04)

—Chris Burnham

PENNSYLVANIA

PHILADELPHIA—3PW at Viking Hall: **N8 Mattson** defeated **Ron Zombie** ... **Damian Adams** beat **Mike Kruel** ... **Rockin' Rebel** went to a no-contest with **Johnny Grunge** ... **Blue Meanie** defeated **Roadkill** ... **C.J. O' Doyle** defeated **Gary Wolf** in a tables, ladders, and chairs match ... **Slyk Wagner Brown** & **April Hunter** beat **Striker** & **Rob Eckos** ... **Sabu** defeated **Ruckus** ... Heavyweight champion **Joey Matthews** won a three-way falls-count-anywhere match against **Jerry Lynn** and **A.J. Styles**.
(06-19-04)

—George Tahinos

PHILADELPHIA—WWE at the Wachovia Center: **The Hurricane** & **Rosey** defeated **Rob Conway** & **Sylvan Grenier** ... **Rhyno** pinned **Garrison Cade** ... **Shelton Benjamin** pinned **Batista** ... **Test** beat **Matt Hardy** ... Raw champion **Chris Benoit** defeated **Kane** ... **Chris Jericho** defeated **Tyson Tomko** in a steel cage match ... Intercontinental champion **Randy Orton** pinned **Edge** ... Women's champion **Victoria** defeated **Molly Holly** ... **Shawn Michaels** pinned **Triple-H**.
(05-22-04)

—Dutch Krewda

MECHANICSBURG—Pro Wrestling Entertainment at Silver Spring Speedway: **Flex Fenom** & **Aidiean**

defeated **Icarus** & **Gran Akuma** ... Women's champion **Fantasia** pinned **Persephone** ... **Shane Shadows**, **Cory Gebhart**, & **Ryan Rupp** beat **Johnny Graham**, **Brian Bookster**, & **Stan Warner** ... **Mike Quackenbush** beat **Hallowicked.**
(06-12-04)

—Timothy A. Walker

McKEESPORT—NWA East at the Sportatorium: **Scottie Gash** pinned **Crusher Hansen** ... **Dash Bennett** pinned **Sabotage** ... Tag team champions **Bigg** & **Kid Cupid** wrestled **Brant** & **Scott Venom** to a double-disqualification ... **Spyral** pinned **Ghost Shadow** ... **Nikita Allanov** & **Devin Devine** beat **Sonny Landell** & **ManChild** ... **Jason Cage** defeated **Justin Idol** by countout ... Heavyweight champion **Mad Mike** defeated **Boomer Payne** in a "four corners of Hell" match.
(06-05-04)

—Vinnie Malucci

WEST MIFFLIN—International Wrestling Cartel at the CCAC South Campus: **Jimmy Rave** beat **John McChesney** ... **T. Rantula** pinned **New Jack** in a weapons match ... **Super Hentai** beat **Kabuki Kid** ... Super Indy champion **Chris Sabin** defeated **C.M. Punk** ... **Josh Daniels** defeated **Al B. Damn** ... **Sebastian Dark** & **Eric Xtasy** beat **Shirley Doe** & **Glenn Spectre** ... **Soldier** beat **Sterling James Keenan** ... **Michael Shane**, **Chris Candido**, & **C.M. Punk** beat **Bubba the Bulldog**, **Dennis Gregory**, & **Jimmy Vegas** in a steel cage match.
(06-05-04)

—Timothy A. Walker

EMMAUS—CHIKARA at the Fire Company: **Blind Rage** & **D.J. Skittlez** co-won a "Double Jeopardy" battle royal ... **Jolly Roger** pinned **Darkness Crabtree** ... **Chris Hero** defeated **Murat Bosporous** ... **Blind Rage** beat **D.J. Skittlez** ... **Hallowicked** & **UltraMantis Black** beat **Shane Storm** & **Mister ZERO** ... **Gran Akuma**, **Icarus**, & **Mike Quackenbush** defeated **The Wild Cards** & **Jigsaw** in an "Ultimate Jeopardy" match. Per a prematch stipulation, The Wild Cards then had their heads shaved.
(05-22-04)

—Jim Wiggins

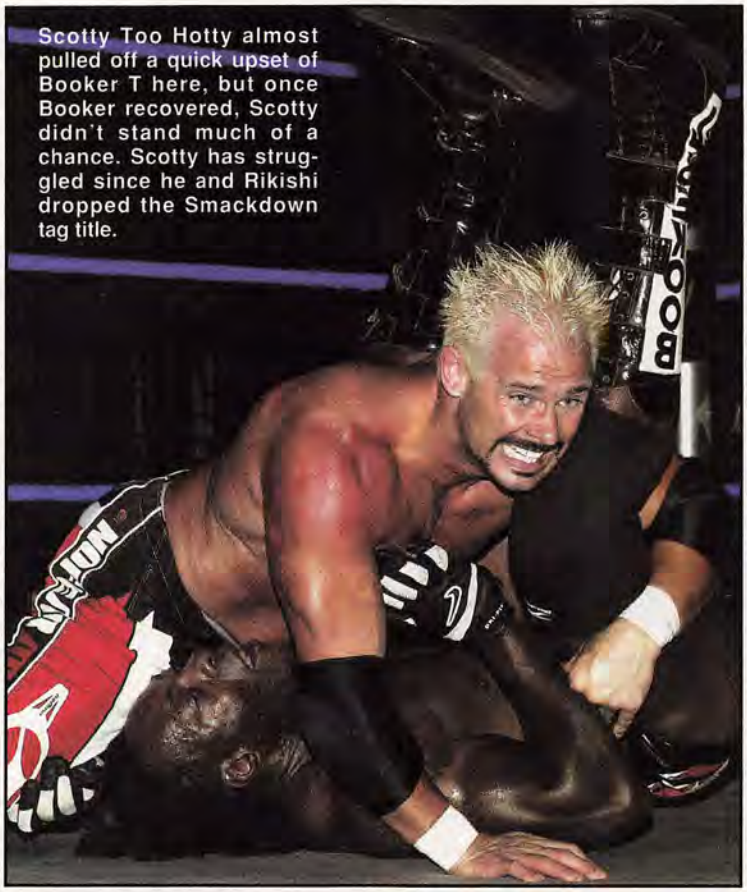
SOUTH CAROLINA

NORTH CHARLESTON—WWE at the Coliseum: Raw tag team champions **Rob Conway** & **Sylvan Grenier** defeated **Rhyno** & **Tajiri** ... **Eugene** pinned **Garrison Cade** ... **Matt Hardy** pinned **Chuck Palumbo** ... Women's champion **Trish Stratus** defeated **Molly Holly** and **Victoria** in a three-way elimination match ... **Chris Jericho** beat **Batista** ... Intercontinental champion **Randy Orton** beat **Edge** ... **Val Venis** defeated **Tyson Tomko** ... Raw champion **Chris Benoit** defeated **Ric Flair.**
(06-19-04)

—Jon Galena

SPARTANBURG—WWE at the Memorial Auditorium: Raw tag team champions **Rob Conway** & **Sylvan Grenier** beat **Matt Hardy** & **Val Venis** ... **Eugene** defeated **Garrison Cade** ... **Tajiri** pinned **Chuck Palumbo** ... Women's champion **Trish Stratus** defeated **Molly Holly** and **Victoria** in a three-way match ... **Chris Jericho** beat **Batista** ... Intercontinental champion **Randy Orton** pinned **Edge** ... **Rhyno** pinned **Tyson Tomko** ... Raw champion **Chris Benoit** beat **Ric Flair.**
(06-18-04)

—Christopher Ceylon



Scotty Too Hotty almost pulled off a quick upset of Booker T here, but once Booker recovered, Scotty didn't stand much of a chance. Scotty has struggled since he and Rikishi dropped the Smackdown tag title.

TENNESSEE

NASHVILLE—NWA-TNA pay-per-view at the Fairgrounds Coliseum: NWA tag team champions **Chris Harris** & **James Storm** defeated **Miyamoto** & **Nosawa** ... **Trinity** defeated **Desire** in a stretcher match ... **Jerry Lynn** pinned **Scott D'Amore** ... **Mascarita Sagrada** pinned **Mini Pierroth** ... NWA-TNA X champion **A.J. Styles** wrestled to a no-contest with **Jeff Hardy** ... **Ron Killings** pinned NWA heavyweight champion **Jeff Jarrett** to win the title.
(06-23-04)

—Jason Langin

NASHVILLE—NWA-TNA pay-per-view at the Fairgrounds Coliseum: **B.G. James**, **Ron Killings**, & **Konnan** defeated **Chad Collyer**, **Onyx**, & **Hotstuff Hernandez** ... **Trinity** pinned **Angel Williams** ... **Pat Kenney** & **Sonny Siaki** beat **Glenn Gilberti** & **Johnny Swinger** in an "Ultimate Humiliation" match ... **Raven** defeated **Sonjay Dutt** ... NWA-TNA X champion **A.J. Styles** pinned **Dallas** ... NWA tag team champions **Chris Harris** & **James Storm** beat **Monty Brown** & **Abyss** by disqualification ... **Bobby Rude**, **Eric Young**, & **Petey Williams** defeated **Jerry Lynn**, **Chris Sabin**, & **Elix Skipper** in a flag match.
(06-16-04)

—Frank Miller

NASHVILLE—NWA-TNA pay-per-view at the Fairgrounds Coliseum: NWA tag team champions **Chris Harris** & **James Storm** defeated **Glenn Gilberti** & **Johnny Swinger** ... **Michael Shane** pinned **Chris Sabin** ... **Sonjay Dutt** beat **Shark Boy**, **David Young**, and **D-Ray 3000** in a four-way match ... **Bobby Rude**, **Petey Williams**, & **Eric Young** beat **Jerry Lynn**, **Heavy Metal**, & **Hector Garza** ... NWA heavyweight champion **Jeff Jarrett** pinned **Konnan** in a non-title strap match ... NWA heavyweight champion **Jeff Jarrett** pinned **B.G. James** in a non-title trailer park match ... **Ron Killings** pinned NWA heavyweight champion **Jeff Jarrett** in a non-title ghetto match ... **A.J. Styles** pinned NWA-TNA X champion **Frankie Kazarian** to win the title.
(06-09-04)

—Frank Miller

NASHVILLE—NWA-TNA pay-per-view at the Fairgrounds Coliseum: **Bobby Rude** & **Petey Williams** beat **Jerry Lynn** & **Heavy Metal** ... **Monty Brown** pinned **Sonny Siaki** ... NWA-TNA X champion **Frankie Kazarian** pinned **The Amazing Red** ... **Abyss** pinned **D-Ray 3000** ... NWA tag team champions **Kid Kash** & **Dallas** defeated **Dusty Rhodes** & **James Storm** ... **Jeff Jarrett** defeated NWA heavyweight champion **Ron Killings**, **A.J. Styles**, **Raven**, and **Chris Harris** in a five-way "King Of The Mountain" match to regain the title.
(06-02-04)

—Harry Burkett

NASHVILLE—NWA-TNA pay-per-view at the Fairgrounds Coliseum: **Jerry Lynn** pinned **Bobby Rude** ... **D-Ray 3000** pinned **David Young** ... **Mr. Aguila**, **Abismo Negro**, & **Heavy Metal** defeated **Mitsu Hirai Jr.**, **Ryuji Hijikata**, & **Nosawa** ... **The Amazing Red** pinned **Sonjay Dutt** ... **Dusty Rhodes** & **James Storm** beat NWA tag team champions **Kid Kash** & **Dallas** in a non-title bunkhouse match ... **Ron Killings** defeated NWA heavyweight champion **A.J. Styles**, **Raven**, and **Chris Harris** in a four-way match to win the title.
(05-19-04)

—Matt Brock

NASHVILLE—NWA-TNA pay-per-view at the Fairgrounds Coliseum: **James Storm** pinned **Kid Kash** ... **Monty Brown** defeated **B.G. James** ... **The Amazing Red** pinned **Sonjay Dutt** ... **Shane Douglas** defeated **Michael Shane** in a corporal punishment match (the use of paddles and leather straps was legal) ... **Bobby Rude** & **Petey Williams** defeated **Hector Garza** & **Abismo Negro** ... NWA heavyweight champion **A.J. Styles** pinned **Chris Harris.**
(05-12-04)

—Harry Burkett

NASHVILLE—NWA-TNA pay-per-view at the Fairgrounds Coliseum: **Sonjay Dutt** pinned **The Amazing Red** ... **Shane Douglas** pinned **Michael Shane** ... **Johnny Devine**, **Petey Williams**, **Bobby Rude**, & **Eric Young** beat

Catch-as-catch-can wrestling at its finest: Dawn Marie against Torrie! These divas are easy on the eyes, but the match quality picked up when their respective partners, Jamie Noble and Spike Dudley, got in the ring.

Christopher Daniels, **Elix Skipper**, **Jerry Lynn**, & **Chris Sabin** ... **Trinity** pinned **Desire** ... **Abyss** pinned **Erik Watts** ... NWA heavyweight champion **A.J. Styles** pinned **Raven**.
(05-05-04)

—Frank Miller

BOLIVAR—Down South Championship Wrestling at the Old Wal-Mart Building: **X Kaliber** pinned **Loose Cannon** ... **Big Indian** defeated **Lord Humungous** by disqualification ... **Family of Pain** defeated **New Orleans Fight Club** ... **David Young** beat **Danny B. Good** by countout ... **San Francisco Treat** pinned **Deadly Dale** ... **Jeremy Blaze** & **X Kaliber** defeated **Showtime** & **Fabulous Rocker** ... **Neil Taylor** & **Brickhouse Brown** beat **X Kaliber** in a handicap match ... Heavyweight champion **Austin Lane** defeated NWA-TNA X champ **A.J. Styles** by disqualification.
(06-12-04)

—Bryan Underwood

TEXAS

DALLAS—New Age Wrestling Alliance at the Royal Lane Shopping Mall: **Wasted Youth** defeated **Brent Masters** & **Stephen Murphy** ... **Pendragon** pinned **Bryan Lewis** ... **Texas Red** pinned **Dark Dragon** ... **Gemini** beat **Max Muscles** ... Heavyweight champion **Seth Shai** beat **David Fuller** by submission ... **Texas Trailer Trash** defeated **NC-17** to win the new NWA Texas tag title.
(06-19-04)

—Corey Graham

DENTON—XCW at the XCW Arena: **Aldo Nova** beat **Craig Jerikho** ... TNT champion **Jack Drastic** beat **Steve Dane** ... **Bullman Downs** pinned **Scott Phoenix** ... **Deacon Riot** beat heavyweight champion **John Allen** in a non-title match ... **Khris Germany** and **Kit Carson** battled to a double-disqualification.
(06-18-04)

—Rob Moore

AUSTIN—Champions of Texas Power Wrestling at Hot Shots Arena: **Psycho Simpson** beat **Mr. A.D.H.D.** ... **Freight Train** defeated **Anthony Fury** ... **PaDonn** beat **Alex Heat** ... **Manny Domingo** beat **Chris James** ... **3rd Rail** & **G.Q. Styles** beat **The Crusaders** ... **Spiro** beat TV champion **Bobby 2 Badd** to win the title ... **Katzushi Miyamoto** beat **American Eagle**.
(06-11-04)

—Tony Lopez

MARSHALL—American Championship Wrestling at the Civic Center: **Doc Holiday** defeated **Scott Ray Vaughn** for the TV title ... **Andy Dalton** pinned **Seth Shai** ... **American Anarchy** beat **Spoiler** in a mask vs. mask match ... **The Bruiser** & **Gemini** beat **Kahn** & **Joey Titan** ... **Black Bart** won a 12-man battle royal ... Tag champs **Ace** & **Mace** defeated **Blake Wiggins** & **Robert Evans** ... Heavyweight champion **New Age Dogg** beat **Joseph**.
(06-04-04)

—Paul Orion

VERMONT

BENNINGTON—CHIKARA at Bennington College: **Jolly Roger** pinned **The ShareCropper** ... **Kobra Kai** beat **Ash** ... **Shane Storm** & **Larry Sweeney** beat **Hallowicked** & **UltraMantis Black** ... **Robbie Ellis** pinned **Legion Cage** ... **Mike Quackenbush**, **Gran Akuma**, & **Icarus** beat **Jigsaw** & **The Wild Cards**.
(05-15-04)

—Jerry Nabors

VIRGINIA

HURLEY—NWA Virginia at the Elementary-Middle School: **John Stone** won a battle royal ... **Malicious Murphy** & **Dragan Frost** wrestled **Sean Calloway** & **Chris Dramin** to a no-contest ... **Donovan Torrez**, **Mike Vaughn**, & **Bad News Johnson** beat **Ron Pharoah**, **Max Dynamite**, & **Drake Tungsten** ... **El Toro Rojo** beat **Grail** by submission ... **The Midnight Mauler** defeated **Gregory Vercetii** ... **Mike Booth** & **Scotty Blaze** wrestled **Dirty Money** & **Sean Lei** to a draw ... **The Barbarian** defeated **Frank Parker** by disqualification ... NWA women's champ **Lelani Kai** beat **Kiley McLean**.
(06-05-04)

—Abe Levi

DANVILLE—Southern Xtreme Championship Wrestling at the Eagles Lodge: **Jon-Jon the Phenomenon** pinned **Flash Flanigan** ... **Jason Blade** & **Justin Flash** defeated **Drake Tungsten** & **Hugh B. Johnson** ... **Marty Reed** beat **Wyld Chyld** ... **Damien Wayne** battled to a double-countout with **Beef** ... **Jimi Love** defeated **Billy Gibbs** ... **Cal Callous** & **Cannabus** defeated **Scotty Blaze** & **Frank Parker** by disqualification.
(05-29-04)

—John Martin

WASHINGTON

CHEHALIS—Washington State Wrestling at the Yard Birds Mall: **Latino Blanco** wrestled **Tony Terrific** to a 10-minute time-limit draw ... **Critter** pinned **Jesse Jiminez** ... **The Terminator** pinned **Cedric the Hitman** ... Tag team champions **C.C. Poison** & **Steve Rush** wrestled **The Blanchard Brothers** to a no-contest ... **Billy Two Eagles** defeated heavyweight champion **Skag Rollins** in a strap match to win the title.
(06-12-04)

—Dustin Nichols

EVERETT—WWE at the Events Center: **The Hurricane** & **Rosey** beat **Rob Conway** & **Sylvan Grenier** ... **Steven Richards** beat **Chuck Palumbo** ... **Matt Hardy** pinned **A-Train** ... **Garrison Cade** defeated **Val Venis** ... **Batista** pinned **Shelton Benjamin** ... Women's champion **Victoria** beat **Molly Holly**, **Jazz**, and **Gail Kim** in a four-way elimination match ... **Chris Jericho** beat **Tyson Tomko** in a steel cage match ... Intercontinental champion **Randy Orton** pinned **Edge** ... **Lita** pinned **Trish Stratus** ... Raw champion **Chris Benoit** beat **Kane**.
(05-16-04)

—Paul Waggoner

WEST VIRGINIA

MARTINSBURG—National Wrestling League at the 157th National Guard Armory: **Snatch Haggis** won a five-man brawl against **Dan McGuire**, **Deuce Donnatelli**, **Spiff Stevens**, and **Hal Litzer** ... **Carnage** beat **Vic Voorhees** by countout ... **Blackhawk** beat **Justin Cage** ... **Dexter Alexander** defeated **Jerkface** in a streetfight ... **Dan & Brent Rage** beat **R.C.** & **R.D. Luv'n** ... **Jason Static** beat **Eagle** by disqualification ... **Doink the Clown** & **Hyjinx** beat **Doken** & **6** ... **The Super Destroyer** won a triangle match over **Buzz Stryker** and **Chad Bowman** ... **Blood** won a five-way barbed-wire, tables, ladders, and chairs match against **Marc Mandrake**, **Morgus the Maniac**, **John Rambo**, and **Shorty Smalls** ... **OGB** beat **Gutterboy** in a first-blood match ... **Prof. Egon Ecton** & **Pirate of the Caribbean** beat **Kevin Featherstone** & **Scott Vaughn** in a no-disqualification match ... **Samu** pinned heavyweight champion **Leslie Leatherman** in a steel chain match to win the title. After the match, Samu voluntarily vacated the title.
(06-19-04)

—Timothy A. Walker

WISCONSIN

LA CROSSE—WWE at the La Crosse Center: **Billy Gunn** & **Hardcore Holly** defeated **Nunzio** & **Johnny Stamboli** ... **Mark Jindrak** defeated **Billy Kidman** ... **Mordecai** pinned **Orlando Jordan** ... Cruiserweight champion **Chavo Guerrero Sr.** beat **Spike Dudley** and **Shannon Moore** in a three-way match ... Smackdown tag team champions **Charlie Haas** & **Rico** beat **Buh Buh Ray** & **D-Von Dudley** ... Smackdown champion **Eddie Guerrero** pinned **John Bradshaw Layfield** in a no-disqualification match ... **Rey Misterio Jr.** pinned **Rene Dupree** ... **Torrie Wilson** beat **Dawn Marie** in a bikini match

... U.S. champion **John Cena** pinned **Booker T**.
(05-24-04)

—Bob Germaine

GREEN BAY—WWE at the Resch Center: **Billy Gunn** & **Hardcore Holly** beat **Buh Buh Ray** & **D-Von Dudley** ... **Mordecai** pinned **Shannon Moore** ... **Mark Jindrak** defeated **Orlando Jordan** ... Cruiserweight champion **Chavo Guerrero Sr.** defeated **Billy Kidman** and **Spike Dudley** in a three-way match ... Smackdown tag team champions **Charlie Haas** & **Rico** beat **Nunzio** & **Johnny Stamboli** ... **Rey Misterio Jr.** pinned **Rene Dupree** ... U.S. champion **John Cena** pinned **Booker T** ... **Torrie Wilson** beat **Dawn Marie** in a bikini match ... Smackdown champion **Eddie Guerrero** pinned **John Bradshaw Layfield**.
(05-23-04)

—Freddy Sanderson

Because Smackdown GM Kurt Angle insisted that Eddie Guerrero was in no condition to wrestle, his match with Danny Basham never officially started. That didn't prevent "Latino Heat" from getting a few shots in on Danny or brother Doug.

INTERNATIONAL

CANADA

QUEBEC CITY, QUEBEC—Elite Wrestling Revolution at the Centre Mgr. Marcoux: **Simon Sanders** beat **Giovanni** ... **Tomassino** beat **The Executionner** ... **Crazy Crusher** beat **Kevin Martel** ... **Dan Paysan** beat **Scott Matrix** and **WonderFred** in a "no gravity" match ... **Kona** beat **Radd Adams** in a no-disqualification match ... **El Generico** beat **Excess 69** ... **DJ Sick** & **Senor Kid** beat **Pure Selection** ... Heavyweight champion **Kevin Steen** beat **Franky the Mobster** by disqualification.
(06-19-04)

—Patrick Mercier

WINDSOR, ONTARIO—Border City Wrestling at Dillon's Nightclub: **Petey Williams** pinned **Roderick Strong** ... **Brad Martin** & **Adam Filangeri** beat **Chris Clontz** & **Dan Pizzano** ... **N8 Mattson** & **Truth Martini** beat **Kris Chambers** & **Floyd Osbourne** ... **Joe E. Legend** defeated **A-1** ... Tag team champions **Hacker** & **Gutter** beat **Conrad Kennedy III** & **Eddie Venom** ... **Jaime D** pinned **Badunkadunk** ... **Alex Shelley** defeated **Zach Gowen** ... TV champion **Chris Sabin** beat **Frankie Kazarian**.
(05-30-04)

—Holly Leyngel

KINGSTON, ONTARIO—WWE at the Memorial Centre: U.S. champion **John Cena** beat **Luther** by disqualification when **Rene Dupree** interfered ... **Billy Kidman** & **Paul London** defeated **Jamie Noble** & **Nunzio** ... **Mordecai** pinned **Scotty Too Hotty** ... **Mark Jindrak** pinned **Funaki** ... Smackdown tag team champions **Charlie Haas** & **Rico** beat **Billy Gunn** & **Hardcore Holly** and **The Basham Brothers** in a three-way elimination match ... **Rob Van Dam** defeated **Buh Buh Ray Dudley** ... Cruiserweight champion **Chavo Guerrero Sr.** pinned **Spike Dudley** ... **John Bradshaw Layfield** defeated **Rey Misterio Jr.** ... **Torrie Wilson** beat **Dawn Marie** ... U.S. champion **John Cena** pinned **Rene Dupree**.
(05-29-04)

—Jonathan Fulton

ENGLAND

BIRMINGHAM—WWE at the NEC: **Edge** pinned **Batista** ... **Rhyno** (substituting for an injured **Matt Hardy**) & **Lita** beat **Tyson Tomko** & **Trish Stratus** ... Women's champion **Victoria** pinned **Molly Holly** ... **Chris Jericho** & **Eugene** defeated **Garrison Cade** & **Johnny Nitro** ... **Shawn Michaels** beat **Ric Flair** ... Intercontinental champion **Randy Orton** defeated **Shelton Benjamin** in a best-of-three-falls match ... **Rob Conway** & **Sylvan Grenier** beat **The Hurricane** & **Rosey** ... Raw champion **Chris Benoit** defeated **Triple-H**.
(05-29-04)

—Paul Bender

MANCHESTER—WWE at the Evening News Arena: **Matt Hardy** defeated **Batista** by reverse decision disqualification ... **The Hurricane** & **Rosey** beat **Rob Conway** & **Sylvan Grenier** ... **Garrison Cade** pinned **Rhyno** ... Intercontinental champion **Randy Orton** pinned **Shelton Benjamin** ... **Shawn Michaels** beat **Triple-H** ... **Chris Jericho** beat **Tyson Tomko** ... **Ric Flair** beat **Edge** by submission ... Women's champion **Victoria** beat **Molly Holly** and **Lita** in a three-way match ... Raw champion **Chris Benoit** defeated **Kane**.
(05-28-04)

—Paul Bender

GERMANY

OBERHAUSEN—WWE at Koenig-Pilsner Arena: **Rey Misterio Jr.** & **Rob Van Dam** defeated **Buh Buh Ray** & **D-Von Dudley** ... **Johnny Stamboli** defeated **Mark Jindrak** ... **Billy Kidman** pinned **Jamie Noble** ... **Mordecai** pinned **Paul London** ... **Torrie Wilson** defeated **Dawn Marie** in a bikini contest ... Cruiserweight champion **Chavo Guerrero Sr.** beat **Spike Dudley** and **Nunzio** in a three-way elimination match ... **The Undertaker** pinned **Booker T** ... U.S. champion **John Cena** pinned **Rene Dupree** ... Smackdown tag team champions **Charlie Haas** & **Rico** defeated **Billy Gunn** & **Hardcore Holly** ... Smackdown champion **Eddie Guerrero** pinned **John Bradshaw Layfield**.
(06-06-04)

—Karl Miller

MUNICH—WWE at Olympiahalle: Smackdown tag team champions **Charlie Haas** & **Rico** defeated **Billy Gunn** & **Hardcore Holly** ... **Mordecai** pinned **Paul London** ... Cruiserweight champion **Chavo Guerrero Sr.** beat **Spike Dudley** and **Nunzio** in a three-way elimination match ... **Mark Jindrak** pinned **Johnny Stamboli** ... **Billy Kidman** & **Torrie Wilson** beat **Jamie Noble** & **Dawn Marie** ... **Rey Misterio Jr.** & **Rob Van Dam** defeated **Buh Buh Ray** & **D-Von Dudley** ... U.S. champion **John Cena** pinned **Rene Dupree** ... **Eddie Guerrero** & **The Undertaker** defeated **Booker T** & **John Bradshaw Layfield**.
(06-05-04)

—Karl Miller

IRELAND

DUBLIN—WWE at the Point Theater: **Matt Hardy** & **Lita** defeated **Tyson Tomko** & **Trish Stratus** ... **Rhyno** pinned **Sylvan Grenier** ... **Eugene** defeated **Rob Conway** ... **Chris Jericho**, **Edge**, & **Shawn Michaels** defeated **Batista**, **Ric Flair**, & **Randy Orton** ... Women's champion **Victoria** defeated **Molly Holly** ... **The Hurricane** beat **Garrison Cade** & **Johnny Nitro** in a handicap match ... **Kane** pinned **Shelton Benjamin** ... Raw champion **Chris Benoit** defeated **Triple-H**.
(05-27-04)

—Jamie Colton

DUBLIN—WWE at the Point Theater: **Batista** pinned **Matt Hardy** ... **The Hurricane** & **Rosey** beat **Rob Conway** & **Sylvan Grenier** ... **Rhyno** defeated **Garrison Cade** ... Intercontinental champion **Randy Orton** pinned **Shelton Benjamin** ... **Chris Jericho** pinned **Tyson Tomko** in a no-disqualification match ... **Shawn Michaels** pinned **Triple-H** ... **Edge** pinned **Ric Flair** ... Women's champion **Victoria** wrestled to a no-contest with **Molly Holly** and **Lita** in a three-way match ... Raw champion **Chris Benoit** beat **Kane**.
(05-26-04)

—Amy Fielding

ITALY

MILAN—WWE at the FilaForum: Smackdown tag team champions **Charlie Haas** & **Rico** defeated **Billy Gunn** & **Hardcore Holly** ... **Johnny Stamboli** beat **Mark Jindrak** ... **Mordecai** pinned **Paul London** ... **Billy Kidman** defeated **Jamie Noble** ... **Chavo Guerrero Jr.** & **Chavo Guerrero Sr.** beat **Spike Dudley** & **Nunzio** ... **The Undertaker** beat **Booker T** ... **Buh Buh Ray** & **D-Von Dudley** defeated **Rey Misterio Jr.** & **Rob Van Dam** ... U.S. champion **John Cena** pinned **Rene Dupree** ... Smackdown champion **Eddie Guerrero** defeated **John Bradshaw Layfield**.
(06-03-04)

—Robert Perroli

PWI classic

From the April 1995 issue

Hell Freezes Over!

JIM CORNETTE MANAGES THE ROCK 'N' ROLL EXPRESS

Once again, Jim Cornette has done the implausible. In search of a title, he has aligned himself with The Rock 'n' Roll Express. Is this a shrewd managerial move, the act of a desperate man, or is it all part of a sinister master plan?

By Chris Bernucca

JIM CORNETTE IS used to being a power broker. But right now, in the area of power, he is broke.

One year ago, Cornette was considered the most influential manager in the sport. He was voted 1993 Manager of the Year by the readers of this magazine. His power stretched from Smoky Mountain Wrestling, where he was the point man for the tag team champions, The Heavenly Bodies, to the WWF, where he acted as adviser for World champion Yokozuna. It was almost impossible to watch a wrestling telecast without hearing Cornette's boasts and vitriolic outbursts.

But Cornette is no longer the most influential manager in the sport. In fact, he isn't even the most influential manager in his federation. Tammy Sytch has supplanted Cor-

Despite what they told us, The Rock 'n' Rolls and Jim Cornette couldn't seem to figure out how they ended up in an alliance. And they didn't look totally thrilled to be in it, to be frank.

nette as the true power broker of Smoky Mountain. Craving the power that comes with managing a champion, Cornette pitched himself as manager to The Gangstas, current holders of the SMW tag team belts. His ego and stature took a tremendous hit when he was completely dissed by Mustafa Saed and New Jack.

"The Gangstas have been called ignorant, and now I see why," Cornette said. "How could they not want the greatest managerial mind in the history of the world in their corner? Ignorance is the only explanation, and Jim Cornette has no patience for ignorance."

Desperate times force men to desperate measures, and Cornette is desperate. He has resorted to a drastic change of heart in order to regain his status as *the* power broker in SMW. Cornette once said that "hell would freeze over" before he would manage The Rock 'n' Roll Express. Apparently, there is a cold front approaching the afterlife's southern hemisphere, because "The Louisville Lip" has reached an agreement to do just that!

"I don't see why everybody is making such a big deal about this," Cornette complained. "Gibson and Morton are two wrestlers who needed a manager and I'm a manager who needed wrestlers. It makes perfect sense to me."

Cornette is right. It does make sense, except for the small fact that he and The Rock 'n' Roll Express are mortal enemies. There is plenty of bad blood among the men, and much of that bad blood was spilled during a feud that lasted for the better part of a year when Cornette managed The Heavenly Bodies. There has never been any indication that Cornette could possibly get along with Rick Morton or Robert Gibson. He has feuded with them for more than a decade! That, Jimbo, is why everybody is making such a big deal about this.

"It's not a lifetime agreement," Morton said. "It's a short-term thing. Robert and I would never commit to a long-term deal with Jim Cornette. But right now, his goal is the same as ours, so we figure it couldn't hurt."

As Morton revealed, the agreement only covers a handful of matches, but most of them are title bouts against The Gangstas, who went to court to win the SMW tag team title

Cornette built a reputation as a shrewd, underhanded, and brilliant in large part because of his never-ending feud with The Rock 'n' Roll Express. Apparently it did have an ending ... or at least a cease-fire. Sorry, Jimbo, but the partnership never made "perfect sense."

WWF

World champion:
Diesel

1. Razor Ramon
2. King Kong Bundy
3. Bob Backlund
4. The Undertaker
5. Lex Luger
6. Davey Boy Smith
7. Tatanka
8. Mabel
9. Owen Hart
10. Irwin R. Schyster

WCW

World champion:
Hulk Hogan

1. Hacksaw Duggan
2. Johnny B. Badd
3. Brutus Beefcake
4. Sting
5. Big Van Vader
6. The Honky Tonk Man
7. Avalanche
8. Dustin Rhodes
9. Arn Anderson
10. Kevin Sullivan

ECW

Heavyweight champion:
Shane Douglas

1. Ron Simmons
2. Sabu
3. Dean Malenko
4. Tommy Dreamer
5. Tasmaniac
6. 911
7. 2 Cold Scorpio
8. The Sandman
9. Brian Pillman
10. Tommy Cairo

TAG TEAMS

1. Marcus Bagwell & The Patriot
2. The Nasty Boys
3. The Heavenly Bodies
4. Bam Bam Bigelow & Tatanka
5. The Gangstas
6. Harlem Heat
7. The Rock 'n' Roll Express
8. The Bushwhackers
9. Public Enemy
10. The Smokin' Gunns

from Morton and Gibson. The Gangstas had scored a pinfall in dubious fashion in September, but Bob Armstrong intervened and restarted the bout. When The Rock 'n' Roll Express emerged victorious, Saed and New Jack hired a lawyer, who challenged SMW to show the precedent allowing Armstrong to restart the match. When Smoky Mountain officials found no precedent, they had no choice but to hand the belts over to The Gangstas.

Robert Gibson can't break New Jack's headlock (above). Rick Morton tries to escape Mustafa Saed's bearhug (right). After all the abuse he and Robert Gibson took from Cornette, he knew it was odd to think about the portly manager using his tennis racket on their behalf? Cornette seemed like a much better fit as manager of The Gangstas.

If there is anyone in Smoky Mountain who is more hated than Cornette, it is The Gangstas. Saed and New Jack have made plenty of enemies with their racist statements; now that they are champions, they have become even more despised. By affiliating himself with The Rock 'n' Roll Express, Cornette could be currying favor with the SMW fans, who adore Morton and Gibson as fan favorites.

But what if Morton and Gibson win the title, only to become rulebreakers? Cornette's managerial influence is well documented and he could get Morton and Gibson to put aside their principles for the sake of becoming or remaining champions.

"That's not gonna happen," said Gibson. "No way. We love the fans, we respect the fans, and we would never turn our backs on them. We've already told Cornette that we have no interest in changing our ways just to win a title. If he tries that, he's out as manager. In fact, if he tries anything Ricky and I don't like, we're through with him. We'll be keeping an eye on him every second of the way."

Worse yet is the possibility that Cornette and The Rock 'n' Roll Express cannot work together. Given the strong personalities involved and the history between them, this is already a precarious relationship. Conflicts between managers and wrestlers have torn apart

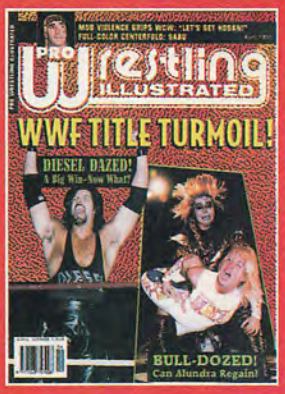
teams with much stronger bonds and it remains to be seen if Cornette, Morton, and Gibson can ever get on the same page.

"Look, it's this simple," Cornette said. "Morton and Gibson have a bone to pick with The Gangstas and so do I. They want the tag team title and so do I. Only someone who is a complete idiot would say that this isn't a perfect match of manager and wrestlers."

A perfect match? Maybe it is, but then again, maybe this is all part of Cornette's master plan. Maybe he

is actually working with The Gangstas in a plot to get rid of Morton and Gibson once and for all. It's hard to imagine Jim Cornette without a title. But it's also hard to imagine him ever *really* making peace with the Rock 'n' Rolls. □

PWI, April 1995



The cover: "WWF Title Turmoil!" was our main cover headline, and it applied to two championships in the WWF. First there was Kevin "Diesel" Nash, who was still celebrating his World title win over Bob Backlund. We wondered if he was ready for the pressures of being champion. Then there was Alundra Blayze (Madusa), who lost the women's title to Bull Nakano on a gigantic non-WWF card in Japan. For the record, Diesel dominated the WWE as champion for a full year before losing to Bret Hart, while it took Blayze just four months to dethrone Nakano.

The centerfold: The daring and dazzling Sabu was featured in this issue. Although he was not the ECW heavyweight champion at the time, he was arguably that promotion's top star—and he did have his eye on that title and the man who held it, Shane Douglas. Sabu was one of the first wrestlers to make tables a huge part of his high-risk, often-reckless offense. In fact, he loved to moonsault onto wooden tables in an effort to break them *after* his matches ended.

Mob Mentality: Kevin Sullivan admitted he had been obsessed with destroying "Hulkamania" for a full decade before he finally came face-to-face with Hulk Hogan in WCW. He assembled his Three Faces of Fear stable for the sole reason of crushing Hogan. However, *PWI* discovered that Sullivan wasn't satisfied with *Three* Faces of Fear. He was reaching out to all wrestlers who hated Hogan—those in WCW, those from Hogan's past, and anyone else—to try to form a huge group to take the "Hulkster" down.

Feud For Thought: Would Dusty and Dustin Rhodes be the latest famous wrestling family to bring a feud into the ring? We considered it almost inevitable at the time, as Dustin was looking to reach the main event level in WCW at the same time his papa was making more frequent comebacks and stealing some of the spotlight away from him. A lot of WCW wrestlers thought they saw a clash coming, but while they did have a rocky relationship outside the ring for a few years, Dusty and Dustin have yet to do battle inside a ring.

Before He Was Skip: Chris Candido enjoyed his greatest fame as Bodydonna Skip in the WWF, but prior to taking on that odd persona, he won the NWA title under his own name. He was understandably proud when we interviewed him in "Press Conference" and made the obligatory boasts. He also had to answer questions that have dogged him for most of his career, most of them involving whether he thought his manager, Tammy (not yet Sunny) Sytch, would stick by him during good times *and* bad.

BACK ISSUES OF PRO Wrestling® ILLUSTRATED

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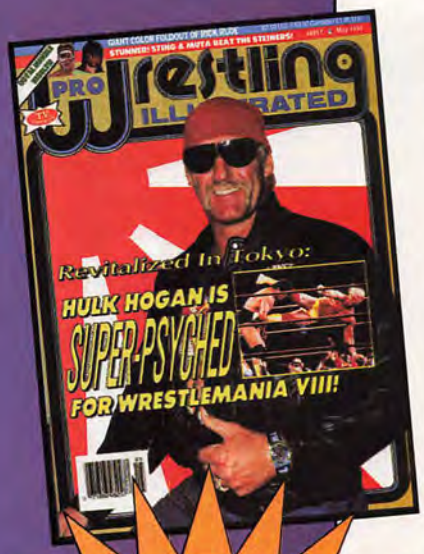

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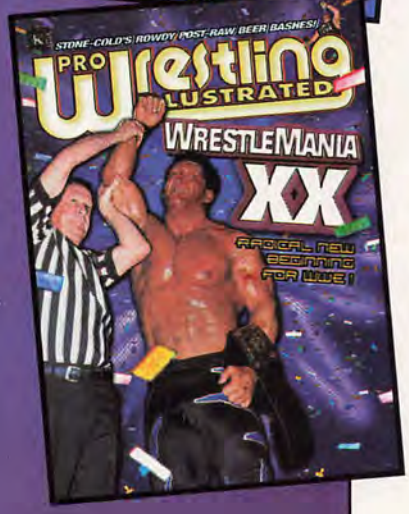

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May 1990: Hulk Hogan: Primed And Ready For WrestleMania VI. Centerfold: Great Muta. Plus: Piper-Rude, Eric Embry, Rock 'n' Rolls, Sid Vicious, pain.

July 1990: The Maturing Of Lex Luger: The "Total Package" Becomes The People's Choice. Centerfold: Rick Martel. Plus: Skyscrapers, Bobby Heenan, Mr. Saito, referees.

September 1990: The Hulkster's Wrath: 7,000 Miles To Violent Redemption. Centerfold: The Steiners. Plus: Jeff Jarrett, Sting, Destruction Crew, Four Horsemen, Curt Hennig.

October 1990: Sting's Painful Lesson: You'll Have No Friends At The Top. Centerfold: Brutus Beefcake. Plus: Orndorff-Blanchard, Tugboat, Teddy Long, Ultimate Warrior, Road Warriors.

April 1991: Sgt. Slaughter Guilty Of Treason! Centerfold: Tom Zenk. Plus: Sting, Magnum T.A., Jesse Ventura, Lawler-Gilbert, Hogan & Warrior.

June 1991: Hulk Hogan: America's Hero. Centerfold: Hacksaw Duggan. Plus: Cactus Jack, Ric Flair, Nasty Boys, Steiners, Simmons-Reed.

July 1991: The War Is Over! Hulk Hogan Liberates The WWF Belt From Sgt. Slaughter! Centerfold: Brian Pillman. Plus: Horsemen, Lex Luger, Eric Embry, Demolition.

August 1991 (Special Issue): Supercards '91. Centerfold: Hulk Hogan. Plus: WrestleMania VII, WCW-New Japan, Ultimate Warrior, Owen Hart, Koloff-Luger.

October 1991: Sid Justice: The Second Coming Of Hulk Hogan. Centerfold: Lex Luger. Plus: Hogan-Slaughter, Terrence Taylor, Barry Windham, Williams-Bigelow.

November 1991: Your Wedding Gift For Savage & Elizabeth: Help Lift The "Macho Man's" Suspension! Centerfold: Bobby Eaton. Plus: Tito Santana, Bushwhackers, Jushin Liger, Brian Pillman.

February 1992: Has Hulk Hogan Had Enough? Centerfold: 1992 calendar. Plus: Sting, Justice-Roberts, hot prospects, Eddie Gilbert.

May 1992: Revitalized In Tokyo: Hulk Hogan Is Super-Psyched For WrestleMania VII! Centerfold: Rick Rude. Plus: Sting & Muta-Steiners, Jarrett & Fuller, Lightning Kid, Randy Savage, intimidation.

June 1992: Exclusive *PWI* Interview: Roddy Piper Speaks Out! Centerfold: Dustin Rhodes. Plus: Dangerously-Sting, Abdullah-Cactus, Sid Justice, Randy Savage.

July 1992: The Best Of The Best—The Masters Of Their Craft. Centerfold: Randy Savage. Plus: Liger-Pillman, Jim Neidhart, U.S.-Japan, Ric Flair.

September 1992: Savage vs. Sting: Why It Isn't That Unlikely. Centerfold: Nikita Koloff. Plus: Steiners, Barry Windham, Sid Justice, Hodge & Weston, Shawn Michaels.

February 1993: No One Can Cut Down Razor Ramon. Centerfold: Curt Hennig. Plus: Jake Roberts, Pillman-Dustin, Ric Flair-Road Warriors, Rick Rude, Snuka-Muraco.

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May 1996: Un-Natural! The WWF Has Finally Gone Too Far! Centerfold: Public Enemy. Plus: Jeff Jarrett, Dreamer-Raven, Dan Severn, Ric Flair, Giant.

October 1996: Peaking Too Soon: Will The Giant Be Ruined By His Own Success? Centerfold: Goldust. Plus: Big Van Vader, Ric Flair, Bulldog, Lex Luger.

February 1997: Mr. Perfect: "Shawn Michaels Stole My Life." Centerfold: "Psycho" Sid. Plus: Kroffat & Furnas, Vince McMahon, Randy Savage, New Razor & New Diesel.

February 1998: Sting vs. Hogan—The Match Of The Century! Centerfold: Hogan vs. Sting fight poster. Plus: 16-page Starrcade preview, Perry Saturn, Dude Love.

May 1998: Starrcade Scandal! We Hate To Say It ... But Give The Belt Back To Hogan. Centerfold: Ric Flair. Plus: Mero & Sable, Taz, Taka Michinoku.

June 1998 (Special Issue): The 1998 *PWI* Poll. Centerfold: Steve Austin. Plus: Sabu, Lex Luger, Sting, Rocky Maivia, Bill Goldberg.

July 1998: WWF vs. WCW: Which Is Better? Centerfold: Rocky Maivia. Plus: Benoit, Bill Goldberg, Ahmed Johnson.

October 1998: Bret Screws Bret, Part II. Centerfold: Hunter Hearst Helmsley. Plus: Jim Ross, Marcus Bagwell, WWF controversy, FBI.

Holiday 1998: *PWI* 500. Eighth Annual Special.

March 1999: 1998—The Year In Wrestling. 1998 In Review, Achievement '98 awards, Unofficial/Official awards, predictions for 1999.

April 1999: The Crock! The Title Change That Screwed The World! Centerfold: Chris Jericho. Plus: Bill Goldberg, Tommy Dreamer, Booker T, more Unofficial/Officials.

May 1999: Who Holds The Key To WrestleMania XV? Centerfold: Konnan. Plus: Mark Henry, Sting-Nash, Bill Alfonso, Brian Hildebrand.

June 1999: The *PWI* Poll. Plus: Mankind, Flair & Turner, VMac, Steiners, New Japan-UFO.

July 1999: Warning! This Team Will Self-Destruct In 15 Seconds! Centerfold: X-Pac. Plus: New Jack-Dudleys, Jesse James, Venis & Godfather, Sting-Bischoff-Flair.

August 1999: Supercards '99: WWF WrestleMania, WCW Uncensored, ECW Living Dangerously. Plus: Super 8, Bam Bam Bigelow, Jerry Lawler, tag team wrestling.

September 1999: Why Stone-Cold Might Get Out While He's Still On Top! Centerfold: Sting. Plus: Kidman & Misterio, The Rock, Bret Hart, Taz-Sabu.

October 1999: Why The World Must Fear Scott Steiner, By Buff Bagwell. Centerfold: Mankind. Plus: Kane & X-Pac, The Godfather, Perry Saturn, 20th anniversary readers' poll.

November 1999: The Women Of The WWF: There's More To Their Power Than Their Looks. Centerfold: Owen Hart. Plus: Rey Misterio Jr., Roddy Piper, Steiners, Steve Austin.

December 1999: Steve Austin: "CEO This! I'm The Damn Champ!" Centerfold: Rey Misterio Jr. Plus: Randy Savage, Jimmy Hart, WCW youth, Billy Gunn.

Holiday 1999: *PWI* 500. Ninth Annual Special.

January 2000: The Millennium Man Mouths Off! An Unforgettable Hour With Chris Jericho! Centerfold: Taz. Plus: Chris Benoit, Sid-Goldberg, Triple-H.
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March 2000: 1999—The Year In Wrestling. 1999 In Review, Achievement'99 awards, Unofficial/Official awards, predictions for 2000.
April 2000: Stone-Cold vs. The Rock: Let's Settle It At WrestleMania! Centerfold: Chris Benoit. Plus: Dallas Page, Goldberg-Vicious, more Unofficial awards.
May 2000: The Y2K *PWI* Poll. Plus: Mitsuharu Misawa, Triple-H, Bret Hart, Hollys, Chyna & Aysa, ECW returnees.
June 2000: Just Wondering, Steph ... Is Triple-H Worth Your Billion-Dollar Inheritance? Centerfold: The Rock. Plus: Heyman-Van Dam, Vader, NWO.
July 2000: Call It A Wrap, Jack! You've Done Your Share ... Go Home! Centerfold: Sid Vicious. Plus: Dusty Rhodes, Disco Inferno, DDP, Dudleys-Hardys.
August 2000: Supercards 2000: WWF WrestleMania, WCW Uncensored, ECW Living Dangerously. Plus: Rob Van Dam, greatest supercards, Super 8.
September 2000: Wrestle McMania! Why The Peace Can't Last. Centerfold: Jeff Jarrett. Plus: Eric Bischoff, Dudleys, Raven.
October 2000: Scott Steiner: The Superstar The WWF Let Slip Away. Centerfold: Rikishi. Plus: Shawn Michaels, Austin-Rock, Rhino-RVD.
November 2000: The Rock vs. Triple-H. Our Special 50-Category Analysis. Pinups: Extreme wrestling. Plus: Nash-Steiner-Hall, Hardcore Holly, wrestling too extreme?
December 2000: Head Hog! Does Undertaker Have Enough Gas In His Tank To Rumble To The Top? Centerfold: Dallas Page. Plus: Kurt Angle, Rikishi, Vampiro-Sting, Japan.

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Holiday 2000 (116 Pages): *PWI* 500. Includes: The editors' views, a look back at 1991's top 25, Achievement 2000 ballot.
January 2001: Who Does He Really Hate? Someone Will Pay For Austin's Pain! Plus: Steven Richards, Justin Credible, Gordon Solie, Jeff Jarrett, Arn-Sid.
February 2001 (116 Pages): The State Of The Game. Includes: The states of the WWF, WCW, ECW, independents, international, the business, the art
March 2001: Hulk Hogan: WWF Fans Want Him Back! Plus: Mike Awesome, Rikishi, Jerry Lynn, Elix Skipper, Triple-H.
April 2001 (116 Pages): 2000—The Year In Wrestling. Plus: 2000 In Review, Achievement'00 awards, Unofficial/Official awards, predictions for 2001.
May 2001: The WrestleMania Curse! Will The Great One Ever Win The Big One? Plus: Vince McMahon, William Regal, Page & Nash, Ivory, Lance Storm, ECW.
June 2001 (116 Pages): The *PWI* Poll. Plus: Ric Flair, Chyna, Steve Austin.
July 2001: Women's Work! It Ain't What It Used To Be! Plus: Dudleys, Chavo Guerrero Jr., Justin Credible, Francine, Scott Steiner.
August 2001 (116 Pages): Supercards 2001: WrestleMania X-Seven, WCW Night of Champions, Super 8. Plus: Big Show, Kane, Jeff Jarrett, Tommy Dreamer.
September 2001: WWF-WCW: The 10 Questions That Must Be Answered. Plus: Triple-H, Stacy Keibler, Paul Heyman, Matt Hardy.
October 2001 (116 Pages): Mid-Year Report. Top 50 stories, grades, half-year awards, predictions. Plus: Perry Saturn, Dallas Page, Terri.
November 2001: A Crying Shane: He Paid The Price To Purchase WCW ... Is He Willing To Pay The Price To Keep It? Plus: DDP-Kimberly, Edge, Molly-Spike, Tajiri, Rob Van Dam, Mick Foley, Florida indies.
December 2001 (116 Pages): *PWI* 500—Angle Climbs To The Top. Includes: The editors' views, Achievement 2001 ballot.
January 2002: There's Something About Lita—What Makes Her The WWF's "It" Girl. Plus: Jericho-Stephanie, Mark Henry, X-Pac, Triple-H, Undertaker.
February 2002 (116 Pages): The State Of The Game. Includes: The states of the WWF, independents, international, the business, the art. Plus: Golderg.
March 2002: No More Joking, No More Choking: Y2J Takes A Serious Stab At Superstardom! Plus: Test, The Rock, Eric Bischoff, Bradshaw, Foley vs. Regal.
April 2002 (116 Pages): 2001—The Year In Wrestling. 2001 In Review, Achievement 2001 awards, Unofficial/Official awards, predictions for 2002.
May 2002: The Mania To End All Manias! What Will Wrestling Look Like By WrestleMania X-9? Plus: Trish Stratus, RVD, Russ Haas, Big Bossman, WWF comedy.
June 2002 (116 Pages): The *PWI* Poll. Plus: Hulk Hogan, Ric Flair, Steve Austin.
July 2002: Steph Infection! How Can Triple-H Keep His Mind On His Game? Plus: Goldust-Terri, NWO, Ron Waterman, Spike & Tazz, Jazz.
August 2002 (116 Pages): Supercards 2002: WrestleManiaX8, WWA Revolution, Super 8. Plus: X-Pac, Steve Corino, Ric Flair.
September 2002: No Rock ... No Problem: The WWF Can Thrive Without The Great One. Plus: WWF draft, Billy Kidman, Sean O'Haire, Stanley Weston.
October 2002 (116 Pages): Mid-Year Report. Top 50 stories, grades, half-year awards, predictions. Plus: Lou Thesz, Francine, Edge.
November 2002: Stone-Cold Meltdown! Plus: Heyman & Lesnar, Lance Storm, NWA: TNA, DDP, A.J. Styles, Island Boys.
December 2002 (116 Pages): *PWI* 500—RVD Is No. 1. Includes: The editors' views, Achievement 2002 ballot.
January 2003: Brock Aftershock: How Lesnar Changed The Future Of WWE. Plus: Chris Benoit, Low-Ki, Jericho-Flair, Rey Misterio Jr., SummerSlam at 15.
February 2003 (116 Pages): The State Of The Game. Includes: The states of Raw, Smackdown, independents, international, the business, the art.
March 2003: Rocky Horror! He Won't Forget What You Did Last Summer. Plus: Matt Hardy, Eddie Guerrero, Bass-WWE, Victoria, WWE's next wave.
April 2003 (116 Pages): 2002—The Year In Wrestling. 2002 In Review, Achievement 2002 awards, Unofficial/Official awards, predictions for 2003.
May 2003 (116 Pages): The WrestleMania 100. Plus: Angle-Lesnar, Christopher Nowinski, Vince Russo, Batista & Flair.
June 2003 (116 Pages): The *PWI* Poll. Plus: Rey Misterio Jr.
August 2003 (116 Pages): Goldberg: He Has WWE Caught Between The Rock And A Hard Place! Plus: WrestleMania XIX, Shawn Michaels graduates, Paul London, Raven.
September 2003 (116 Pages): Guardian Angle: The One Superstar WWE Couldn't Afford To Lose. Plus: Hurricane, Sting, Kazarian-Sabin, Jeff Jarrett, Booker T, Brock Lesnar.
October 2003 (116 Pages): Mid-Year Report. Top 50 stories, grades, half-year awards, predictions. Plus: Mick Foley.
December 2003 (116 Pages): Goldberg: Is He Getting A Bum Rap? Plus: Jeff Hardy, Mick Foley, Harris & Storm, Billy Gunn.
January 2004 (116 Pages): All Fired Up! Can Kane Blaze A Trail To The Raw Title? Plus: Christian, Cena-Gowen, Samoa Joe, Goldberg-Flair, ugliest wrestlers.
February 2004 (116 Pages): The State Of The Game. Includes: The states of Raw, Smackdown, NWA-TNA, independents, international, the business, the art.
April 2004 (116 Pages): 2003—The Year In Wrestling. 2003 In Review, Achievement 2003 awards, Unofficial/Official awards, predictions for 2004.
May 2004 (116 Pages): Randy Orton's Dad Speaks Out! "Ric Flair Is Gonna Ruin By Boy!" Plus: Trish Stratus, 3 Live Kru, Cena-Angle, A-Train, ROA/All-Japan, Keiji Muto, three-ways.
June 2004: Chris Benoit Wins Raw Title! Radical New Beginning For WWE! Plus: WrestleMania XX, Steve Austin, TNA women, Chavo Guerrero.

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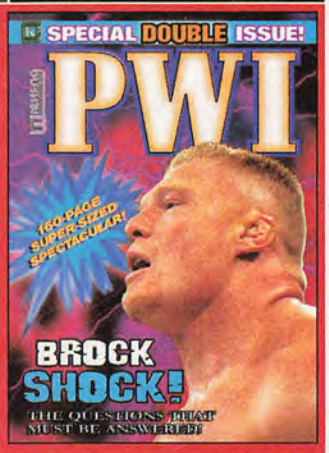
BROCK IN A HARD PLACE



Brock Lesnar was the cover boy of our July 2004 double-issue, as we examined why "The Next Big Thing" left WWE to take a shot at the NFL, and evaluated his chances on the gridiron. In that exclusive analysis, we were skeptical about Lesnar's chances for success in the NFL, and predicted we'd see him back in the ring within a year. Many readers weighed in with their thoughts.

"Let's face it, Brock Lesnar's heart was never in wrestling," wrote Sean Sommer of Grand Island, Nebraska. "He got into wrestling to make a fast buck. I hope he falls flat on his face in football."

"Wrestling isn't for everybody," e-mailed Brett Jaccarino of Poughkeepsie, New York. "It takes a special athlete to take the physical abuse of wrestling. Lesnar should be applauded for being forthcoming and walking away instead of just going through the motions and hurting morale."

Jocelyn Healy of Ridgeway, Ontario, thought we were too harsh on the former champ.

"Lesnar has the size and athleticism to make it in the NFL," she wrote. "He'll be the first wrestler ever to go from world champion to Super Bowl champion."

KANE DID IT AGAIN

I have been a big wrestling fan for more than 20 years now. I have ordered many pay-per-views, bought a lot of merchandise, and purchased tickets to see wrestling live several times. Over the past few years, I have seen some questionable things, such as Triple-H and Mick Foley hitting each other with a two-by-four wrapped in barbed wire and lit on fire, The Undertaker attempting to stab Steve Austin, and the tasteless Kane-Triple-H necrophilia storyline. But when I saw what Kane did to Shawn Michaels on the June 14 *Raw*, crushing Michaels' larynx with a chair, I felt WWE crossed the line from wrestling to senseless violence.

I understand the sport has to evolve and change with the times, but I don't find this entertaining at all.

ANTHONY BELFIORE
(E-mail address withheld by request)

Moving from Smackdown to Raw last year was a good career move for Matt Hardy. Or so reader Len Stoddard thought. Now he wishes Hardy could do the opposite.

LOUSY "MATTITUDE"

I thought that Matt Hardy got the boost he needed when he left Smackdown and signed with Raw last year. He did well for a while with Smackdown, but he was getting lost in the shuffle. I didn't even mind seeing him dump Lita when he joined Raw. I expected a feud with Chris Jericho and maybe even Triple-H eventually. Instead, his career has taken a turn for the worse. For a while, he was rarely even making appearances on Monday nights. Now he's caught between Kane and Lita and usually getting his tail kicked by Kane. If there's any way he can work it out and go back to Smackdown, I wish it would happen. At least maybe we could see him go after the cruiserweight title again. He deserves better.

LEN STODDARD
Belzoni, MS

BLINDED LIZ

I just read the "Press Conference" with Chris Jericho (July 2004), and I couldn't believe what I was reading. I respect Liz Hunter and her journalistic viewpoints. I have even stood behind her on certain situations, but I can't

stick with her on this one with Jericho.

True, Jericho was a jerk for making a bet with Christian over who could woo Trish Stratus or Lita first, and he may have had what happened to him at WrestleMania coming to him. Still, is it just me, or was Jericho the only one that was a real man about it? At least he stepped up and took responsibility. Christian has yet to apologize! Also, Jericho came to Trish's defense on several occasions leading up to 'Mania, including that abomination of an intergender tag match where Eric Bischoff put Christian and Jericho against Lita and Trish. Wasn't it Jericho that put a stop to it? Ms. Hunter seems to conveniently forget that!

Trish, though I hate her heel turn, I could understand why she did what she did, but Christian is a slimeball for doing what he did. He claims that Jericho was his friend, but he sold him out in a heartbeat. I just hope that Trish isn't really taken with Christian, and this is a plot to get him as well, because Christian will abandon her just like he did Jericho and Edge before that.

Want an example? Check out that cage match on *Raw* when Jericho had Trish in the Walls of Jericho, and Christian, seeing this, was more concerned with getting out of the cage than saving his woman. I wonder what Liz thinks of Christian after that. I still respect Liz, but she needs to state all of the facts next time instead of going the "ultra-feminist" route (and this is a man writing this letter).

ERVIN V. GRIFFIN JR.
griffiev@hotmail.com

NO FAN OF "DA MAN"

I want to talk for a minute about Bill Goldberg. Apparently, Goldberg left WWE because he was unhappy about the way he was being portrayed by WWE Creative.

Hello? Who was I watching for the last year in WWE? Wasn't this the same Goldberg that had stalking charges pressed against him by Elizabeth and was losing tag team matches with Buddy Lee Parker in the old WCW? WWE doesn't have a monopoly on mishandling Goldberg.

In fact, Vince McMahon took Goldberg to a whole different level. Things could have been a lot worse for him. How many ex-WCW wrestlers have come to WWE and not lived up to the expectations that they set in WCW? Let's see, there's Vader, Public Enemy, DDP, Kanyon, Billy Kidman, Ultimo Dragon (need I continue?).

Now let's look at the other side of the coin. How many former WCW wrestlers came to WWE and won a world title? There's Goldberg, Chris Jericho, Eddie Guerrero, and Ric Flair. It seems like Goldberg's in good company.

One last question: How many ex-WCW wrestlers came to WWE and won a world championship in less than a year's time? Besides Goldberg, only Flair comes to mind. So remind me again, what is Goldberg complaining about? Oh yeah, he's one of those wrestlers whose ego tells him the wrestling world should revolve around him. WWE doesn't need wrestlers like that.

Bill Goldberg had it a lot better in WWE than he realized, according to Shaun Stirneman. He thinks "Da Man" complains too much.

SHAUN STIRNEMAN
ststriker@yahoo.com

JUST DO IT, VINCE!

If there was ever a time for WWE to hold a huge interbrand pay-per-view, this would be it. Not only does it have to worry about TNA since it has a show on cable-TV now, but WWE has some intriguing possibilities for the matches.

Imagine, if you will, a card on which we could see Chris Benoit vs. Eddie Guerrero in a battle of champions, John Cena vs. Randy Orton, Charlie Haas vs. Shelton Benjamin, Shawn Michaels vs. Undertaker, and Triple H vs. anybody else. I understand that WWE needs to let the rosters get settled for a while, but the possibility of great matches like this won't be around forever.

JEFF JUDD
Greenville, PA □

PWI Hotline Extra!

Your answers to our question of the week!

Question of the week: What are your thoughts on the Lita pregnancy storyline? (June 21 to 27, 2004)

Hotline callers respond: "Pregnancy and wrestling just don't mix, whether we're talking about Terri Runnels, Stacy Keibler, or Mae Young," said Joe Schmidt of Worcester, Massachusetts. "As far as I'm concerned, this is a desperation move by Creative."

"It's about time for WWE to stop insulting our intelligence," responded Megan Conley of Barrie, Ontario. "Fans are willing to go along with a lot of ridiculous things, but in this era of tell-all books and stuff, does anyone really believe Kane got Lita pregnant?"

Jon Shaw of Abilene, Texas, has no problem with the storyline.

"I know there are plenty of haters out there, but this pregnancy thing gives a fresh direction to Lita, Kane, and Matt Hardy," he said. "It may not be very original, but it makes for interesting drama."

PWI official ratings

For period ended July 4, 2004

TOP 10

1. **CHRIS BENOIT**
   224, Edmonton, Alberta
   (1) WWE Raw champion
2. **TOSHIAKI KAWADA**
   245, Ashikaga, Japan
   (7) All-Japan Triple Crown champion
3. **JOHN B. LAYFIELD**
   306, Roscoe, TX
   (8) WWE Smackdown champion
4. **EDDIE GUERRERO**
   223, El Paso, TX
   (2) No. 1 contender: WWE Smackdown title
5. **TRIPLE-H**
   269, Greenwich, CT
   (5) No. 1 contender: WWE Raw title
6. **KENTA KOBASHI**
   282, Fukuchiyama, Japan
   (–) GHC heavyweight champion
7. **THE UNDERTAKER**
   304, Dallas, TX
   (–) No. 2 contender: WWE Smackdown title
8. **JEFF JARRETT**
   230, Nashville, TN
   (–) NWA heavyweight champion
9. **RANDY ORTON**
   265, St. Louis, MO
   (9) WWE Intercontinental champion
10. **JOHN CENA**
    260, West Newbury, MA
    (10) WWE U.S. champion

Randy Orton

TAG TEAMS

1. **ROB CONWAY & SYLVAN GRENIER**
   Combined weight: 475 pounds
   (–) WWE Raw tag team champions
2. **MITSUHARU MISAWA & YOSHINARI OGAWA**
   Combined weight: 430 pounds
   (6) GHC tag team champions
3. **MINORU SUZUKI & YOSHIHIRO TAKAYAMA**
   Combined weight: 514 pounds
   (3) IWGP International tag team champions
4. **BUH BUH RAY & D-VON DUDLEY**
   Combined weight: 579 pounds
   (4) WWE Smackdown tag team champions
5. **CHRIS HARRIS & JAMES STORM**
   Combined weight: 516 pounds
   (–) NWA tag team champions
6. **NUNZIO & JOHNNY STAMBOLI**
   Combined weight: 463 pounds
   (–) No. 1 contenders: WWE Smackdown tag title
7. **KAZ HAYASHI & SATOSHI KOJIMA**
   Combined weight: 416 pounds
   (8) All-Japan International tag team champions
8. **THE HURRICANE & ROSEY**
   Combined weight: 570 pounds
   (10) No. 1 contenders: WWE Raw tag title
9. **THE BASHAM BROTHERS**
   Combined weight: 492 pounds
   (–) No. 2 contenders: WWE Smackdown tag title
10. **ANDY DOUGLAS & CHASE STEVENS**
    Combined weight: 444 pounds
    (–) No. 1 contenders: NWA tag title

WWE RAW

Raw Champion:
CHRIS BENOIT
(C) 224, Edmonton, Alberta

1—**TRIPLE-H**
(2) 269, Greenwich, CT
2—**RANDY ORTON**
(3) 265, St. Louis, MO
3—**KANE**
(8) 326, St. Louis, MO
4—**EDGE**
(5) 240, Toronto, Ontario
5—**EUGENE**
(–) 226, Jefferson, IN
6—**CHRIS JERICHO**
(6) 225, Winnipeg, Manitoba
7—**BATISTA**
(7) 318, Washington, DC
8—**MATT HARDY**
(–) 220, Cameron, NC
9—**TAJIRI**
(10) 213, Tokyo, Japan
10—**WILLIAM REGAL**
(–) 248, Blackpool, England

WWE SMACKDOWN

Smackdown Champion:
JOHN B. LAYFIELD
(1) 306, Roscoe, TX

1—**EDDIE GUERRERO**
(C) 223, El Paso, TX
2—**THE UNDERTAKER**
(4) 304, Dallas, TX
3—**JOHN CENA**
(2) 260, West Newbury, MA
4—**BOOKER T**
(3) 250, Houston, TX
5—**REY MISTERIO JR.**
(9) 163, San Diego, CA
6—**KENZO SUZUKI**
(–) 266, Hekinan, Japan
7—**ROB VAN DAM**
(5) 237, Battle Creek, MI
8—**MORDECAI**
(–) 278, Memphis, TN
9—**LUTHER REIGNS**
(–) 285, Phoenix, AZ
10—**RENE DUPREE**
(6) 250, Montreal, Quebec

OVW

OVW Champion:
MATT MORGAN
(C) 330, Fairfield, CT

1—**RODNEY MACK**
(8) 240, Lafayette, LA
2—**BIG BAD JOHN**
(–) 320, New Orleans, LA
3—**MATT CAPPOTELLI**
(5) 220, Norwich, NY
4—**JOHNNY JETER**
(1) 218, San Diego, CA
5—**JOHNNY NITRO**
(7) 204, Los Angeles, CA
6—**CARLY COLON**
(6) 210, San Turce, Puerto Rico
7—**MIKE MONDO**
(3) 185, Long Island City, NY
8—**NOVA**
(–) 214, Bricktown, NJ
9—**SETH SKYFIRE**
(–) 224, Louisville, KY
10—**DA BEAST**
(–) 270, Atlanta, GA

RING OF HONOR

ROH Champion:
SAMOA JOE
(C) 270, American Samoa

1—**BRYAN DANIELSON**
(3) 185, Aberdeen, WA
2—**HOMICIDE**
(1) 220, Brooklyn, NY
3—**COLT CABANA**
(5) 235, Chicago, IL
4—**C.M. PUNK**
(6) 220, Chicago, IL
5—**DOUG WILLIAMS**
(–) 230, Maidstone, England
6—**ALEX SHELLEY**
(9) 199, Detroit, MI
7—**AUSTIN ARIES**
(–) 202, Milwaukee, WI
8—**JOHN WALTERS**
(10) 220, Boston, MA
9—**MARK BRISCOE**
(–) 188, Laurel, DE
10—**SPANKY**
(–) 212, Olympia, WA

Top 10 and Tag Team ratings are based on won-lost records for the past month, quality of opposition, and inherent skill of each wrestler or team. These ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board. All other ratings are based on the official current positions of challengers to the top title in each category; certain titleholders receive an automatic spot in the ratings. The number in parentheses indicates a wrestler's position in that category last issue; (-) indicates that the wrestler was not rated in that category last issue. while (C) indicates the wrestler was champion in that category last issue.

BAD 2 THE BONE WRESTLING: Champion—Vic the Bruiser; **1**—J.C. Bailey; **2**—Billy Black; **3**—Simon Sezz; **4**—Billy Maverick; **5**—Steve Marino; **6**—Mason the Mangler; **7**—Menace; **8**—Shawn Shultz; **9**—Loco; **10**—Mike Samples.

CENTRAL WRESTLING ALLIANCE: Champion—Mongoose; **1**—Terry Alan; **2**—Jad T. Lungini; **3**—Maddawg; **4**—Skip Sherwood; **5**—Little Guido; **6**—Chopper; **7**—Raziel; **8**—Chase Daniels; **9**—J.T. Money; **10**—J.D. Thunder.

CHIKARA: Champion—Hallowicked; **1**—Mike Quackenbush; **2**—Gran Akuma; **3**—UltraMantis Black; **4**—Icarus; **5**—Jigsaw; **6**—Chris Hero; **7**—Jack Marciano; **8**—Eddie Kingston; **9**—Jolly Roger; **10**—Mister ZERO.

EAST COAST WRESTLING ASSOCIATION: Champion—John Walters; **1**—Prince Nana; **2**—Mike Kruel; **3**—Austin Aries; **4**—Cheetah Master; **5**—Mr. Ooh La La; **6**—Freak Nastty; **7**—Mozart Fontaine; **8**—Japanese Pool Boy; **9**—Mike Fury; **10**—Johnny Maxx.

INTERNATIONAL WRESTLING CARTEL: Champion—Eric Xtasy; **1**—Chris Sabin; **2**—Shirley Doe; **3**—C.M. Punk; **4**—Sebastian Dark; **5**—Dean Radford; **6**—Sterling James Keenan; **7**—Colt Cabana; **8**—Jimmy Jacobs; **9**—Super Hentai; **10**—T. Rantula.

NATIONAL WRESTLING LEAGUE: Champion—Title Vacant; **1**—Leslie Leatherman; **2**—Snatch Haggis; **3**—John Rambo; **4**—Gutterboy; **5**—Blood; **6**—Morgus the Maniac; **7**—OGB; **8**—Doink the Clown; **9**—Hyjinx; **10**—Samu.

NEW WRESTLING HORIZONS: Champion—Jason Rumble; **1**—Gangrel; **2**—Sonny Roselli; **3**—Legion Cage; **4**—Larry Huntley; **5**—Cameron Mathews; **6**—BullMoose Calhoun; **7**—Dr. Reginald Heresy; **8**—Osirus; **9**—Rick Daniels; **10**—Hardware.

NWA/ECCW CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING: Champion—Vance Nevada; **1**—Vid Vain; **2**—Michelle Starr; **3**—Matt Borne; **4**—Scotty Mac; **5**—Dropkick Murphy; **6**—Moondog Manson; **7**—R.A.G.E.; **8**—Fabulous Fabio; **9**—Asian Cooger; **10**—Skag Rollins.

NWA WILDSIDE: Champion—Onyx; **1**—Jason Cross; **2**—Mikal Adryan; **3**—Jeremy V; **4**—Caprice Coleman; **5**—Rainman; **6**—Fast Eddie; **7**—Tank; **8**—Altar Boy Luke; **9**—Jimmy Rave; **10**—Adam Jacobs.

RING WARS CAROLINA: Champion—Dr. Love; **1**—DJ P. Roc; **2**—Eddie Brown; **3**—Hangtime; **4**—Aaron Devil; **5**—Ali Steele; **6**—Tre G; **7**—Ouga Bouga; **8**—The Stro; **9**—Delicious Dino; **10**—Steve Michaels.

TORNADO PROFESSIONAL WRESTLING: Champion—Justin Lee; **1**—Romero Contreras; **2**—Sonny C; **3**—Terry Montana; **4**—Butch Dalton; **5**—Michael Faith; **6**—AWOL; **7**—Poo Bear; **8**—Mitch Carter; **9**—Shadow of Death; **10**—Draven Cross.

WORLD OF HURT WRESTLING: Champion—Warpath; **1**—Danger; **2**—Brodie Lee; **3**—Nick Neighborhood; **4**—Shane Alden; **5**—Chuck Deep; **6**—Jeff Starr; **7**—Swinger Sedooski; **8**—Thornn; **9**—Scott Scaresdale; **10**—Bert Williams.

NWA

NWA Champion:
JEFF JARRETT
(1) 230, Nashville, TN

1—A.J. STYLES
(C) 202, Gainesville, GA
2—RON KILLINGS
(-) 230, Charlotte, NC
3—RAVEN
(2) 243, Short Hills, NJ
4—RICKY MURDOCH
(5) 261, Houston, TX
5—J.T. WOLFEN
(3) 297, New Haven, CT
6—D-LO BROWN
(-) 281, Chicago, IL
7—COLT CABANA
(-) 235, Chicago, IL
8—ONYX
(10) 218, Jamaica City, NY
9—JEFF HARDY
(-) 212, Cameron, NC
10—JERRELLE CLARK
(-) 190, Orlando, FL

NWA-TNA

NWA Champion:
JEFF JARRETT
(3) 230, Nashville, TN

1—A.J. STYLES
(C) 202, Gainesville, GA
2—RON KILLINGS
(5) 230, Charlotte, NC
3—ABYSS
(6) 295, Cincinnati, OH
4—RAVEN
(2) 243, Short Hills, NJ
5—FRANKIE KAZARIAN
(1) 220, Yucca Valley, CA
6—MICHAEL SHANE
(9) 221, San Antonio, TX
7—D-LO BROWN
(-) 281, Chicago, IL
8—CHRIS SABIN
(-) 207, Hell, MI
9—MONTY BROWN
(-) 268, Detroit, MI
10—AMAZING RED
(10) 147, Brooklyn, NY

JAPAN

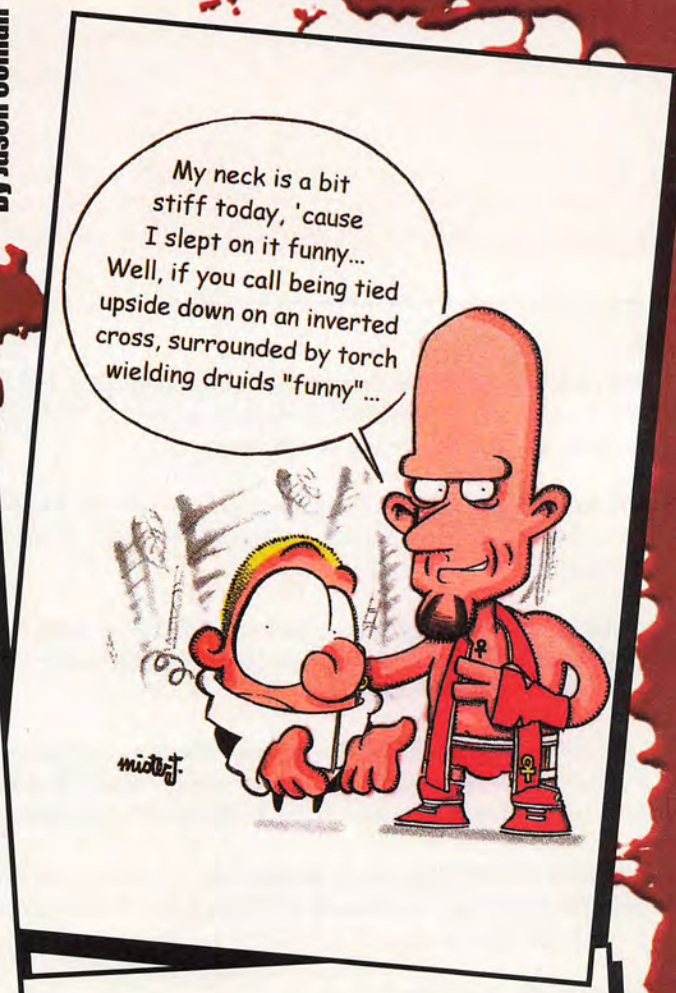
1—TOSHIAKI KAWADA
(2) 245, Ashikaga, Japan
All-Japan Triple Crown champion
2—KENTA KOBASHI
(3) 282, Fukuchiyama, Japan
GHC heavyweight champion
3—KAZUYUKI FUJITA
(-) 253, Funabashi, Japan
IWGP heavyweight champion
4—TIGER MASK IV
(-) 170, Uruyasu, Japan
5—HEAT
(-) 204, Tokyo, Japan
6—KEIJI MUTO
(4) 245, Yamanashi, Japan
7—MASA CHONO
(-) 235, Tokyo, Japan
8—YOSHIHIRO TAKAYAMA
(8) 270, Sapporo, Japan
9—HIROYOSHI TENZAN
(-) 270, Tokyo, Japan
10—MITSUHARU MISAWA
(-) 228, Ashikaga, Japan

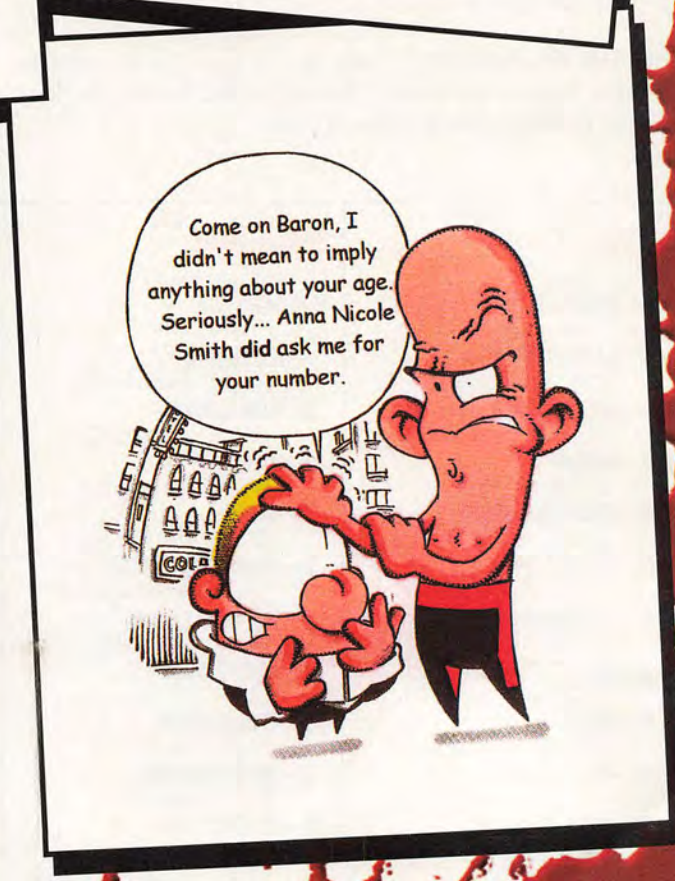
MEXICO

1—MR. NIEBLA
(1) 185, Cualtitlan, Mexico
2—HECTOR GARZA
(-) 220, Monterrey, Mexico
3—EL HIJO DEL SANTO
(4) 180, Tulancingo, Mexico
4—L.A. PARK
(2) 235, Torreon, Mexico
5—ULTIMO GUERRERO
(5) 173, Mexico City, Mexico
6—ABISMO NEGRO
(9) 210, Pachua, Mexico
7—REY BUCANERO
(-) 197, Mexico City, Mexico
8—SHOCKER
(3) 185, Guadalajara, Mexico
9—JUVENTUD GUERRERA
(7) 165, Mexico City, Mexico
10—VAMPIRO
(-) 220, Thunder Bay, Ontario

Drawing Blood

By Jason Conlan





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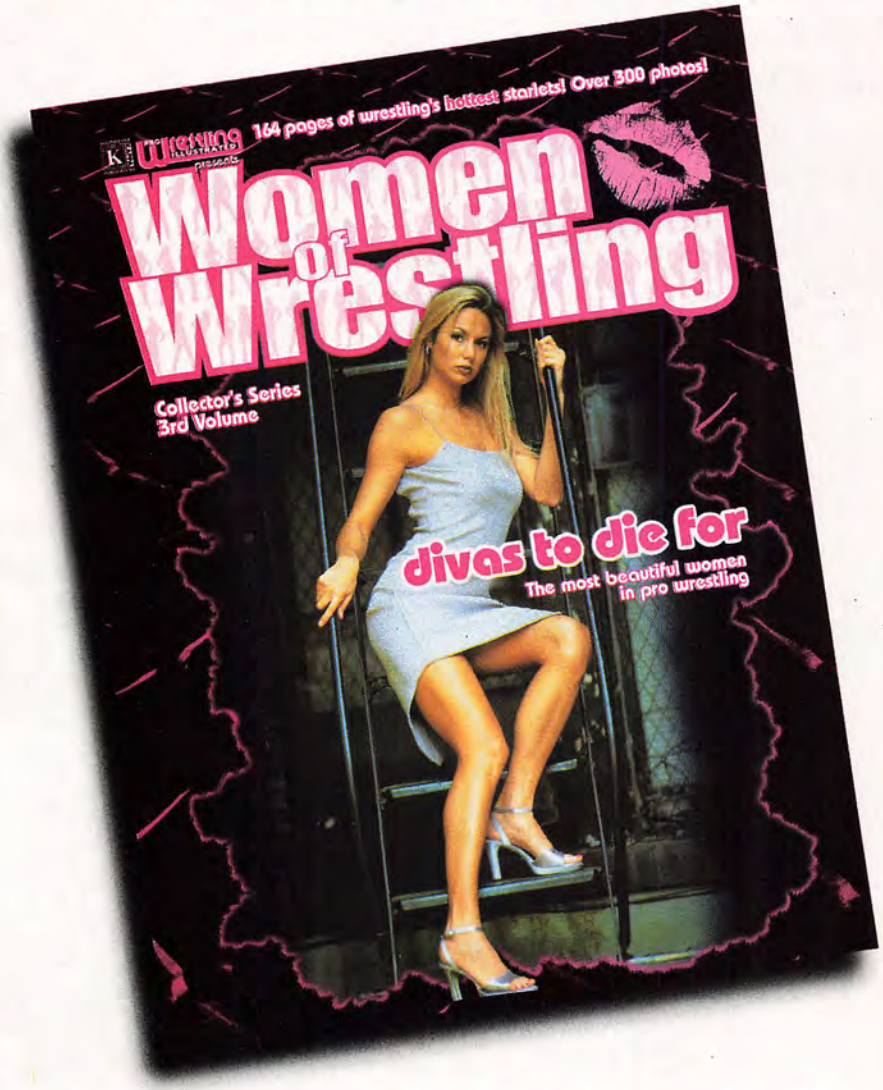

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